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From Image to Identity: The Search for Authenticity in the Early Modernist Drama of Maxwell Anderson, John Millington Synge, Federico Garcia Lorca and D. H. Lawrence.

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modernist drama of Maxwell Anderson, John Millington Synge,
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Oliver, Janice Maria, Ph.D.

The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1991

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**FROM IMAGE TO IDENTITY: THE SEARCH FOR AUTHENTICITY IN
THE EARLY MODERNIST DRAMA OF MAXWELL ANDERSON, JOHN
MILLINGTON SYNGE, FEDERICO GARCIA LORCA AND D. H.
LAWRENCE**

A Dissertation

**Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

**in
The Department of English**

**by
Janice Oliver
B.A., University of Southern Mississippi, 1975
M. A., University of Southern Mississippi, 1977
May 1991**

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Dedication

**To H. P.,
without whom, nothing is possible**

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Abstract

Working roughly from the last decades of the nineteenth century into the first quarter of the twentieth, early modernist playwrights wrote in times which were dominated by realism, but when many still looked to poetic forms for expression. They shared artistic space with realist practitioners like Ibsen and Shaw on the one hand and poetic dramatists like Yeats and Eliot on the other. Interested in dramatizing the conflict between the private and the public selves, they faced a central problem of creating a form and attendant style that could bridge the gap between the individual and her/his environment, thus harmonizing them into an authentic identity. This dissertation answers the following question: if a type of dialectic between the selves could be envisioned which could result in authentic identities for characters, what sort of form and technique would facilitate this dialectic? A group of early modernist playwrights from various countries and cultures addresses this issue in several ways. From Maxwell Anderson's verse drama Mary of Scotland, to the intensely poetic prose of John Millington Synge's The Playboy of the Western World, to Federico Garcia Lorca's poetic realism in The House of Bernarda Alba and to D. H. Lawrence's prose naturalism in The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd-- each playwright manipulates realism in service to diverse styles while depending to one degree or another on the image in language or on the stage to convey a psychological reality in which a character can recognize choices for action as s/he moves toward or away from self-realization. In order to recognize how each playwright responds stylistically to the question of identity, this study first examines the nature of poetic language,

and more particularly the image as the basic structural entity of stage poetry. Once the dramatic and philosophical functions of the image are considered, we examine its psychological role with respect to the concept of the self. We then discuss how these authors respond to the private versus public self dichotomy by using imagistic elements to enable their characters either to discover or reject authentic identity. Each writer, we find, uses images not only esthetically to illuminate stage language in a poetic fashion, but dramatically to further choices for action, psychologically to motivate characters to make those choices, and symbolically to illustrate the principle of authenticity, thereby reconciling the divided self.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1956, looking back at what appeared to be the failure of realism to address the central idea that the "fate of mankind is social," playwright Arthur Miller in "The Family in Modern Drama," discusses how in drama the force of human relationships gives origin to form and style.

Acknowledging that most plays are not thematically homogeneous, having instead "predominant qualities," Miller asserts that characters function in either a private context that gives rise to a realistic prose style or a public one that elicits a non-realistic poetic style. In his view the central problem facing contemporary dramatists is the creation of a form and attendant style that could unite the private individual with his public environment because he sees a "deep split between the private life of man and his social life" (40). While noting that realistic plays had not "with ease and beauty" bridged the widening gap between the private and the public selves, Miller also criticizes much poetic drama of his time that focuses on subjective psychology while ignoring man's important social fate.

Where Miller finds hope is in the "troublesome " grey area of drama that cannot be easily categorized according to how the private/prose or public/poetic informing principles influence style: for him, plays like Our Town that are "poetic" without verse work toward closing the gap and manifesting the social theme because they dramatize the "larger truths of existence while using the common materials of life" (39). Implicitly, then, Miller advocates a more inclusive definition of poetic drama, one that means more than including verse in plays. From his vantage point, he

recognized that hard and fast distinctions between poetry and prose had loosened in favor of a form that might contain elements of both. Additionally, Miller's concept of the private and public selves, predicated upon social and familial roles, would have to be more flexibly defined if there is to be a bridging of the gap between these selves in drama. The idea of the self as being externally determined by human relationships, either in the family or out in the world, must be modified to allow for the individual to determine, from an essential self, just what unique character these public roles will take on. Those familial roles that Miller sees as primary are not so much received, then, as infused with individual qualities. With this more encompassing view of identity, the early modernist playwright interested in dramatizing the harmonizing of the selves might portray a character seeking to achieve authenticity, or a consistency between inner experience and outer expression, by using poetry, for instance, to explore a character's interiority.

Using Miller's observations as a common ground, we can frame several questions about form and technique implied there and used here as a basis for discussion. First, can the gap between the private and the public self be bridged by a dramatic form that will unite the two forms of discourse? Secondly, if a type of dialectic between the public and private selves could be envisioned that would result in authentic identities for characters who achieve internal/external harmony, what sort of form and technique would facilitate this dialectic? Miller's post-war vantage point as one experienced in dramatic theory and practice sheds light on some earlier dramatists who grappled with those same philosophical issues and technical problems articulated in these questions. Writing in an era in which realism dominates, but in which many still looked to poetic forms for expression,

these early modernist playwrights shared artistic space with realist practitioners like Ibsen and Shaw on the one hand and poetic dramatists like Yeats and Eliot on the other as they sought to wed poetic language to the informing principle of authentic identity. Operating in Miller's "grey area" where poetic language was successfully incorporated into a realistic drama, these writers also recognized the importance of poetic imagery in giving characters choices for action so that identity could be realized.

A group of these early modernist playwrights from various countries and cultures has to varying degrees incorporated poetic elements into plays in which choices for action in society are possible and in which the informing principle of authentic identity emerges. In this study into how Maxwell Anderson, John Millington Synge, Federico Garcia Lorca and D. H. Lawrence address these issues, the relationship between poetic elements, dramatic action and a character's identity will be examined. This selection of one play from each crosses a wide spectrum of styles: from Anderson's verse drama Mary of Scotland, to the intensely poetic prose of Synge's The Playboy of the Western World, to Garcia Lorca's poetic realism in The House of Bernarda Alba and to Lawrence's prose naturalism in The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd. Influenced by an innovative milieu, some writers of the period like Anderson followed the course of exploring a character's inner life through poetic language, but by choosing modified verse forms. Others like Lorca sought to combine theatrical elements-- language, music, dance and scenic design--into a comprehensive poetic statement about the character. Still others like Synge found that prose could be made to function like poetry, as they incorporated poetic elements into more realistic or naturalistic modes of drama. In contrast to the three other dramatists, only Lawrence, as the last and most transitionally

modern playwright in this study, anticipates in his stylistic choices a growing skepticism that language could clearly articulate identity.

Moreover, these plays are representative of their era, the early modernist. According to critic Norman Holland, literature in the early modernist period is characterized by texts that suggest an easily recognizable world behind them, representational works that, while containing novel aspects of psychological or social reality, still make reference to a coherent world view (Innovation, 291-92). Both European and Anglo-American drama in this age extending roughly from the last decades of the nineteenth century into the first quarter of the twentieth began alluding to realities common to the society of ordinary men. Moving away from the sentimental popular entertainment that was nineteenth century theatre, the early modernist playwright instead chose to open the genre to bold experiment, stylistically as well as thematically. Areas such as human sexuality and economic welfare provided the writer with unprecedented material to explore.

This period may be thought of as a transitional one in the history of modern drama--and of Western society--from a time of relative philosophical certainty that humankind could discern who they were to a time when no assurances as to identity could be given or made. Early modernist dramatists intrinsically believed that people could yet create an identity for themselves, a belief not yet altered by existential doubt. And so drama of this period continues a Western tradition, since it develops the idea that a person is able to discover who s/he is by taking action in the world. Of course, the concept of human identity varies with time and place, depending on how the specific culture views the individual's role in the world. Characters as culturally diverse as Oedipus, Hamlet, Nora Helmer, and Willy Loman move through a process of self discovery, despite the fact

that philosophical and psychological contexts differ in each of their respective eras and cultures. The idea of portraying a person as striving out of her/himself, as developing a capacity to recognize an evolving self, attracts the early modernist playwright as forcefully as it did those who preceded and some who followed them. Although this writer could take a traditional theme, s/he was nevertheless interested in exploring fresh alternatives stylistically. For realistic style we turn in this early modernist era to its progenitor, Henrik Ibsen.

Often designated the prototypical modern playwright, Ibsen is generally seen as the father of a generation of mainly European writers discontent with both closed, quasi-romantic forms and Scribean melodrama. The period he and other stylistic and thematic revolutionaries like Strindberg, Chekhov and Gorky helped initiate transformed the "well made play" into a more realistic and flexible drama that, while dealing with markedly expanded subject areas, also incorporated elements of romantic subjective reality. J. L. Styan says that realism is the "desire to reproduce on the stage a piece of life faithfully" (164), and Eric Bentley speaks of its "turning away from all forms of elevated discourse to simple and colloquial discourse" (4). One of the most important tenets of realism, however, centers upon the audience's expectations: Miller asks what it is about our commonly held experience of reality that governs what we would expect to hear on a realistic stage.

In opposition to this predominant strain of realism were successive waves of avant-garde schools like symbolism, surrealism and expressionism, each serving in turn to modify Ibsenist realism in an atmosphere of eclecticism. Symbolist authors particularly, such as Mallarmé, Maeterlinck and Hofmannsthal, wanted to examine an inner

reality, through evocative, poetic language and other devices, just as realists had focused on external reality. Anglo-American drama in this age remained relatively insulated from the wildest swings of Continental experimentation, but its rather mainstream realism did manifest influences from symbolist, expressionist and other avant-garde schools: George Bernard Shaw and Eugene O'Neill, both Ibsenists initially, experimented with modified realism.

And so between the exhausted nineteenth century forms and the explosive experimentation of the high modernist era--when playwrights such as Brecht and Duerrematt wrote non-referential, sometimes abstract drama that made its own frankly artificial and self-contained statement about a reality that excluded psychic certainty--stands this early modernist period as a time of transition when authors could write with some surety about a still-coherent, if shaky, universe. Many early modernist experimenters in dramatic form and style held, however, to a common view that language itself could communicate both the psychological and social reality of a character to an audience sharing a similar perspective as to the efficacy of words to carry truth about human existence.

The plays in this study were written between 1907 and 1936, and belong to this early modernist period chronologically, philosophically, and aesthetically. Maxwell Anderson in the United States, J. M. Synge in Ireland, Federico Garcia Lorca in Spain, and D. H. Lawrence in England--each wrote drama that falls within the parameters of early modernism. First, each subscribes to the idea that drama could make valid statements about reality outside itself. Second, each affirms to varying degrees the reliability of language to explore a character's interior, thereby helping to develop the concept of identity. Although these four plays cannot be

considered strict examples of realism, they do subscribe to the tenet of that movement that calls for accuracy concerning a time and place exterior to the stage and referenced by it. Whether in Anderson's Edinburg castle, Synge's turn-of-the-century County Mayo public house, Lorca's Andalusian hacienda or Lawrence's Nottingham colliery village, we find that each writer roots his drama in the sights and sounds of real places and in the psyches of real, recognizable people. Indeed, while each playwright manipulates realism in service to styles as diverse as poetic symbolism or more prosaic naturalism, each also depends to one degree or another upon language to convey a psychological reality in which a character can recognize choices for action as s/he moves toward or away from self-realization.

In order to pursue how each early modernist playwright in this study responds stylistically to the question of identity, we will first examine the nature of dramatic poetic language, and more particularly the image as the basic structural entity of stage poetry itself. Once the dramatic and philosophical functions of the image have been considered, we will examine its psychological role with respect to the concept of the self. We will then discuss how authors respond to the private versus public self dichotomy by using imagery to enable their characters either to discover or reject authentic identity. From image to identity: the ensuing chapters will then examine how, in these four early modernist plays, imagistic elements inform drama in order to explore choices for the self.

Poetry has almost continuously been wedded to western drama for several millennia: from practitioners like Aeschylus and Shakespeare through romantic theorists like Coleridge and on to modern dramatists like

Eliot--this continuum bears witness to the consistency with which poetic language has been used to develop the concept of identity in drama (Donoghue 249-51). Even in the midst of the rise of realism on the stage, some dramatists after the last century continued to believe that poetry most fully represents the totality of human expression. In The Spirit of Language in Civilization, Karl Vossler discusses the fact that, although language to the modern sensibility is a "veil and a hindrance" and a less than adequate substitute for feelings and actions (4), the mind, spirit and nature all find inclusion in the universally expansive quality of poetry (233). And as the art most representative of man's observable actions, drama provides a promising venue from which to portray the inner, psychic life of human beings through the character's words and actions. If, like Anniah Gowda, we can take as a given that poetry expresses "all that passes in the recesses of the human mind" (395), we can then see why the dramatist of human interiority might choose poetry. In addition to the connotative element of poetic words, contends Stuart R. McLeod, their rhythm and sound value add to their emotional appeal, so that the hearer must participate on a more imaginative level (9-10). Michael Black further observes that some early modernist dramatists wished through poetry to mediate a "direct sense of contact with another centre of consciousness" (12), thereby putting us in contact with "the movement of other minds" (16), those of characters whose psychic reality we know indirectly through what we hear them say and see them do.

Language alone is not sufficient to manifest poetry on the stage. Denis Donoghue, whose The Third Voice provides a touchstone for other ensuing studies, defines poetic drama inclusively, noting that poetry for the theatre, not simply a verbal construct, must also include gestures, plot, scene and

visual stage imagery--all elements that should "exhibit in their internal relationships those qualities of mutual coherence and illumination required of the words of a poem" (10). Of course, the idea that language itself cannot carry the drama originates with Aristotle, who first stressed the importance of action as its first cause. Francis Fergusson defines the Aristotelian concept of action (praxis) as, not actual deeds, but the motivation from which these deeds are done, further saying that a play describes the movement of a character's psyche outwards, becoming a working out of the motive towards either success or failure (8-9). Donoghue elaborates on Fergusson's idea of action, saying an author presents a succession of enacted situations that are the "objective equivalent" of this motive (7). Poets who value language might sometimes allow the words to assume the primary burden for carrying the action forward; so, since the stage can never be used simply to deliver beautiful poetry, there must be a sharing, says McLeod, between the implicit poetry and the more explicit action in drama (124, 206, 213).

One way a dramatist of interiority shows how human thoughts and emotions are expressed is by relying on the image as a poetic device. Donoghue discusses its local characteristics when he says that the image becomes an essential mode of "bringing meaning to birth" in the drama (250). In literature diverse perspectives of man converge through imagistic elements as they function aesthetically to adorn a speech, dramatically to further a plot, psychologically to explore a character's consciousness and philosophically to comment upon the human condition. Emerging from the playwright's imagination, images can be described as objects that enter her/his consciousness as perceptions and which are memories of sense experiences, or instruments of cognition that serve to define present

experience. In The Poetic Image, C. Day Lewis describes the poetic function of the image as the "drawing-back from the actual, the better to come to grips with it" (99). And he sees the poetic imagination as the power of the mind that seeks an affinity with the external world, an image becoming a fact processed through this imaginative "sea change" (70). Ezra Pound called the image an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time; in his view, the imagination becomes the power that produces the literal image, which in turn unites thought and feeling,¹ an idea that also applies for the early modernist dramatist who deals with these selfsame areas of human experience.

For the stage the playwright gives characters words to speak, costumes to wear, and gestures to make, as well as surrounding them with objects: these images lead us to a fuller understanding of what it means to be human beings, especially those in conflict with themselves about their place in society, their identity. The image, while accurately portraying a character's thoughts and emotions, becomes stronger by being placed in the wider context of dramatic elements like character and scene. Jean Cocteau, an early modernist poetic dramatist, said that the action of a play is in images, since poetry of the theatre is, like a coarse rope of lace, more a function of integrated dramatic elements than is poetry in the theatre, which, like a piece of lace material, can be perceived only indistinctly by the viewer (45). Unlike the lyric, whose form provides the thoughtful reader with time to reflect on the significance of its elements, poetry of the theatre, says McLeod, must contain imagery which is concrete, has sensual appeal and which foregoes abstraction, since the rapid pace of the stage demands ready absorption (330). The imagistic words spoken by the character, along with those stage images surrounding him/her, contribute to poetic unity

when all elements work together to enhance the whole. In the final analysis, says McLeod, images not only provide a means to know what a character thinks and feels, but they act as unifiers with other elements to give meaning on multivalent symbolic levels (219). Black adds that an image rarely exists in isolation; instead it combines with other images in a chain of relatedness, symbolizing a thematic observation about mankind as it describes the psyche of a particular character (76-77).

The image as an essential component of stage poetry also figures as the nexus that links man with the world outside himself: "at the precise point where an image is formed. . .we meet the world, deal with it," interjects William Lynch, packing into this sensual referent all experience, thought and emotion, so that one could not get closer to a person than through the imagery he uses (23, 25). It is at the image that both literature and psychology converge to discover meaning. Psychological theorists are also interested in how imagery represents our reality to us, concluding that imagistic language helps to objectify experience. ² "In other words," psychologist Eric Greenleaf asserts,

the language itself, as we ordinarily use it, is so constructed that if we speak of our 'inner experience,' feelings and thoughts at all, we must do so in terms taken from the rich description English affords of the world of physical objects apprehended through sight, kinesthesia, touch. (191)

When one considers, then, the wide spectrum of theory and practice through which the image passes, its importance in limning the reality of human and dramatic experience cannot be overstated. Since the author's task may be said to imagine what might be real to the character, s/he must do more than simply represent objects in the total context of her/his art;

these images must acquire enriched, added significance (Dervin 115). The verbal image, through the dramatic process, must enable the reader/hearer to move down, below the surface of words, to where the character's consciousness moves through the evolution embodied in the action. "Imagistic, poetic language," says Black, "takes us down below the level of logical transition. . . image-shifts, the verbal associations, the central rhythmic ictus and its transformations and suspensions seem the immediate activity of another mind" (58).

When a playwright uses stage imagery in service to character, s/he explores the inner self as it relates to the material world. In the theatre as in life the character discovers what range of selves s/he would like to discover through language (Singer, Pope 30). The self as a function of the consciousness can be described as anything that a person thinks s/he is when subject to her/his own contemplation or action. On a purely societal level the self can be thought of as an objective, relational and fluid concept: what you are is based upon what you say and do and how others react to you. R. D. Laing, in Self and Others, speaks of the self as being defined by others and others being defined by it; man relies, he says, on "others' actions and testimony to infer how he experiences himself" (20).

A problem arises, however, when conflict takes place between the societal being-for-others and the more individualistic being-for-oneself (Laing, Self 133). This problem is, of course, the one Miller alluded to earlier, between what he called the private and the public selves. Actually, the subjective, personal self reacts against a concept of self that may seem simply too much a distillation of social encounters. Many believe that man intuitively, from inner experience, a self that is private and inaccessible to others. This essential, actual and imperfect self, they would argue, with its constellation

of values, attitudes, and traits, actually gives the social self its uniqueness and serves as a basis from which to predict action³. Neither aspect of the self eclipses the other in any qualitative sense; instead, what provides dynamic implication is the interaction between the two, the mutual influence each has on the other. Since a person must live for her/himself as well as for others, says Donald Hogan, s/he must synthesize personal needs and requirements of the social world by defining social roles for her/himself (340). Under ideal circumstances, this mutually conditioned interaction, or dialectic, of the selves advances towards balance and wholeness; but, although such conditions prove difficult in the human sphere, for the early modernist dramatist this "becoming" process that mediates the self/other split through poetic imagery affords ample material for dramatic conflict.

In order to evade acceptance of the imperfect essential self, a person/character might create a false self, one that manifests an ideal, but one that also inhibits all the potential within the essential self. S/he may also create a false self for another, if the other's own "becoming" poses a threat. Laing says this insecure personality becomes more preoccupied with preserving the self rather than gratifying it (Divided Self 44). Circumstances present enough of a menace to this person that a mask, a false self, must be kept in place for the world to see, in order that s/he might not lose the self that s/he wishes to protect. To this person, an already "perfect" false self masks an unacceptably imperfect actual one. Maxwell Maltz further points out that this insecure person invites frustration when s/he seeks to operate in a real world with a fictitious self because s/he is unable to tolerate imperfection in her/himself and in others (126). Because of her/his need to keep destructive forces at bay, s/he never reveals the

essential self in word or deed. Instead, says Laing, perception and action are filtered and directed by a false self, which is consciously divided and never open to the full experience of reality or aliveness (Divided 87).

According to Frances Vaughn, this person thinks one way while doing another and feels one way while acting another--all to protect a false sense of self (19).

In a more well-integrated personality, on the other hand, the self/other conflict will be neither negated nor avoided with a false self; instead, self-definition comes from synthesizing both personal needs and social requirements because human beings need to be inner as well as other directed (Hogan 341-345). Norman Holland, in The I, discusses the self/other split by saying that as one's sense of selfhood is confirmed by community membership, a unifying dialectic occurs, analagous to theme and variation, between the sameness within and the diversity without (33,36). "Each of us constantly meets new realities," Holland says,"to which we bring a preexisting identity. . .through a dialogue of self and others we shape responses which are new in substance but familiar in style" (51). This present study examines just this dialectic of the selves evolving from the dynamic relation between imagistic elements and action in these plays.

"Identity" as Holland uses the term can be described as the continual experience of self, especially with regard to how an individual orients her/himself to the world. As discussed earlier, identity as a concept has been modified by shifting historical perspectives, from the identity of a god-created man, through that subjective/objective split which was represented by neoclassic and romantic models, to the disavowal of identity in this present, post-modern age. Once a purely philosophical idea, concludes Robert Langbaum, "identity" did not assume its present psychological

meaning until the "unity of self became problematic" (25). Erik Erikson, the psychologist who most clearly defines identity for the modernist era, speaks of it in conjunction with the self-versus-other conflict when he says that the term expresses a mutual relatedness between them, suggesting a "persistent sameness within oneself (self-sameness) and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential character with others" (58-59). Erikson's idea of identity formation--what adolescents do to become socially mature--stands as a midway point between Freud's inner-derived process and the more radically modern, behaviorist idea that man mechanically plays roles in life. Three out of the four dramatists in this study also take this centrist position when they write to bridge the self/other gap and support the viability of identity. While Anderson, Synge and Lorca search for early modernist metaphors to affirm the possibility of discovering identity, Lawrence's play illustrates that living out an identity may be less possible as a character's poetic articulation decreases.

In her study of the identity theme in drama, June Schleuter compares drama and life, the character to the person, noting that the fixed, fully achieved identity on the stage cannot entirely mirror real life, for action precedes character in drama (8-9). Concurring with Aristotle, Schleuter says that we know all on the stage through words and deeds, whereas she believes that in life, character, or psychological existence, precedes action. She further reasons that modernist dramatists can portray in a particularly apt manner the rift between the outward social self and the inward or real self, since contemporary theatre is a fitting metaphor for the role-playing done in real life (11). "If identity is defined in life in terms of action and roles and modern man's essential life is denied," she says, "then the traditional dramatic character, itself no more than the sum of its

actions, is closest to being an exact representation of its real life counterpart than it ever has been" (12).

However, even in our own skeptical age, man still desires integrity and identity apart from his roles. Schleuter asserts that "we may look to those playwrights who reject the condition of social roles as a final statement of human identity for an affirmation of the real identity behind the fictive identity in real life" (12). This "real" identity can be called authenticity because some people seek consistency between inner experience and outer expression in their lives.

In The Search for Authenticity, J. F. T. Bugental lays a philosophical foundation for authenticity when he constructs, upon humanistic psychological values, a profile of a person as more than a sum of her/his parts, as concerned with human relations, as one who is as fully self aware as possible, as one capable of choosing what possibilities s/he will pursue, and as one intentionally striving for purpose and meaning in life (11-12). In the ideal, Bugental says, the person who accomplishes a measure of authenticity achieves harmony with what is, a resolution of the self/other dichotomy (33). By fully confronting the classical existential anxieties of being through self-awareness, by taking actions based upon choice and taking full responsibility for the choices made, this "authentic" person is in "constant relation with his fellows while yet being separate from them" (Bugental 40). A person's thoughts, feelings and actions, summarizes Vaughn, become harmonized and non-contradictory in this authentic state of inner consistency (19).

Since humans have been discussed here as being both particular and private beings, as well as communally involved, any attempt to harmonize these two aspects of selfhood must be seen as incomplete, although the

person can experience moments when the self knows itself. S/he may want to disengage from engulfment in others, but s/he must also acknowledge the impossibility of becoming purely particular also, says commentator Bruce Wilshire (286-87). In order to achieve a higher degree of authenticity, however, the person must disengage from the destructive process of self-deception and deception of others described earlier and engage in the process of mediation between the inner private and outer public selves. Of course, the risk inherent in this manner of living is that one never does comprehend in life, the way one does in drama, enough about her/himself. "We have the task," Bugental writes, "of creating ourselves as we discover ourselves" (41). Dramatists in this study portray characters of wide diversity, with respect to authentic identity, from those who achieve integration to those who never create or discover a self since they cannot disengage from deception.

The four plays selected are particularly appropriate for this study of how stylistic technique informs the identity theme because, first of all, they are weighted more toward action than language; that is, characters are developed in a psychologically believable manner, with choices for taking action that confirm Aristotle's description of the primacy of action and words emanating from incident. Second, these particular plays demonstrate, through a wide variety of poetic styles, Donoghue's encompassing definition of poetic drama that will illuminate identity. Third, they have a preponderance of either verbal or visual stage imagery, a fundamental criterion and one subsumed in the above definition of poetic drama. Therefore, though Anderson's intermittent verse forms differ from Synge's naturalistic poetry, Lorca's visual stage imagery and Lawrence's

pronounced prose style, the difference is one of degree between Anderson and Synge, who use more imagery in language, and Lorca and Lawrence, who use it more in stage language.

Using these criteria to choose plays for this study, I selected four that I thought responded well to the very concepts that Arthur Miller would articulate thirty years later about how technique can become wedded to an informing principle. These are by no means meant to represent all early modernist drama, but they do adequately present an ample cross-section of the many modernist plays written during this period whose authors use imagistic elements in the service of the identity theme. Each writer uses images not only aesthetically as illuminating stage language in a poetic fashion, but dramatically as furthering choices for action, psychologically as motivating characters to make those choices, and symbolically as illustrating the principle of authenticity to reconcile the divided self.

Chapter II discusses how in Mary of Scotland Maxwell Anderson investigates the private/prose and public/poetic concept by choosing an historical setting and using language not only to motivate one character to protect a false self, but to modulate images for another so that she can take action and achieve authenticity. Chapter III describes how, in The Playboy of the Western World, John Millington Synge redefines who can use poetry by injecting it into the private sphere and by creating two forms of discourse that contrast the poetic individual to the prosaic community; finally, Synge indicates in his image choices for a romantic hero and heroine how an adverse society can destroy attempts at authenticity. Chapter IV deals with The House of Bernarda Alba, Federico Garcia Lorca's redefinition, on the basis of a naturally poetic peasant culture like Synge's, of who can use

poetry; unlike Synge, however, Lorca uses stage imagery liberally to illustrate how an oppressive society defeats the only character who tries to attain authenticity. Finally, Chapter V treats D. H. Lawrence's The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd, where Lawrence mirrors, in the image missing from language but exteriorized on the stage, the steady diminishment of authentic identity as characters find that they cannot use language to make choices for the self.

Notes

¹ See Pound's discussion of the image in "Affirmation--as for Imagisme," Selected Prose 1909-1965, ed. William Cookson (New York: New Directions Publication Corporation, 1973), 374-77.

² Research among cognitive theorists into how the image and the imagination link heterogeneous psychotherapies has been extensive and illuminating for this study into how dramatists may use the image to enhance a character psychologically. Besides those theorists mentioned in the chapter text, for other important discussions about image theory and application see Mardi Jon Horowitz, Image Formation and Cognition (New York: Appleton, 1970); The Function and Nature of Imagery, ed. Peter W. Sheehan (New York: Academic Press, 1972); and J. E. Shorr, Psychotherapy Through Imagery (New York: Intercontinental Medical Book Corporation, 1974).

³ Derived primarily from humanistic psychology, this idea of the self as the central component of personality has many theoretical proponents. Along with earlier psychologists and practitioners like Jung, Adler, Fromm and May, the writings of Gordon W. Allport and Carl Rogers illuminate the self. Allport's Becoming (New Haven, Conn.:Yale University Press, 1955) especially stresses values, attitudes and traits as prime factors in determining the proactive, non-pathological individual. In On Becoming

a Person (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961), Rogers addresses the underlying unity and harmony that is the process of real self creation. And in A Way of Being (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1980), after he discusses the dividedness that results when the real, experiencing self becomes overcome by the rigid conscious self, Rogers advocates congruence through altering self concept in a safe therapeutic relationship.

Chapter 2

ANDERSON AND AUTHENTICATION OF THE SELF

This chapter will discuss how Maxwell Anderson uses poetic imagery to give characters choices for action that eventuates either in their becoming more authentic or more protective of false selves. An early modernist playwright interested in language as it mediates between the inner private and outer public self, Anderson experiments with verse forms in Mary of Scotland, making the play ideal for this study because of his technique of modulating image patterns to indicate the unfolding of identity in his characters. For this playwright, poetry of the theatre means poetry in language, specifically verse forms modified for early modern audiences. Interested in bridging the gap between the individual and his environment, Anderson mediates the dialectic of the selves through language that potentially harmonizes the individual's needs with requirements from the social world. In his dramatization of human relationships in a poetic style, Anderson uses imagistic elements to explore choices for the self, thereby affirming the efficacy of identity for modern mankind.

Much of the drama of Maxwell Anderson (1888-1959) centers upon historical characters and circumstances because contemporary situations do not yield easily to the verse forms that he wanted to use. Many of the fifteen or so of his major plays illustrate his method of choosing an historical subject and telling the story in verse while commenting upon thematic issues relevant to modern audiences (Lee 50). In the decade following his successful verse tragedy Elizabeth the Queen (1930), Anderson wrote the plays that stand as his best work. He dominated American

theatre of the thirties, as O'Neill had in the twenties (Wall 339), popularizing poetic drama, for however brief a time. Of all the historical periods Anderson dealt with, the one he knew best and most successfully illuminated was the Tudor age: Anderson himself would later consider successful all three of the plays in his Tudor trilogy that focus upon women— Elizabeth the Queen, Mary of Scotland (1933) and Anne of a Thousand Days (1948) (Avery 233).

As for Mary of Scotland, from the raw material of historical fact Anderson selects much and discards some in service to his vision. W.S. Clark says that the main characters are painted in broad strokes to present "a clear-cut battle between good and evil" (1085). Audiences appreciated this romantic portrayal of the ill-starred Tudor queen,¹ while contemporary critics like Stark Young and Richard Dana Skinner commended it, Skinner calling it a fine "work of poetic eloquence" (180). And speaking for more recent critics, William Smith Clark praises the play, saying it is "Anderson's most effective poetic tragedy in the stage" (1085).

Unlike so many of his contemporaries who wrote realistic social drama, Anderson saw theatre as a means toward helping man achieve a moral identity. He believed that a person possesses an innate dignity and an inborn striving mechanism through which s/he could evolve into an ideal self. Seeing the theatre as a "religious institution devoted entirely to the exaltation of the spirit of man" (Bases 11), Anderson so firmly believed in drama as an affirmation of inchoate goodness that he thought audiences would support plays that fulfilled this exemplary purpose (Bases 15). As an extension of his moral idealism, he gravitated to the classical model of poetic drama as the perfect expression of his vision. By seeing theatre as

exalting the human spirit and reaching into the "upper air of tragedy" (Essence 32), Anderson hoped that poetry would triumph over the pallid theatre of prose as his own age of reason would be followed by one of faith (Essence 35).

In developing his own rules for writing modern tragedy that centers around an imperfect yet morally exceptional person who experiences an internal conflict between the forces of good and evil, Anderson follows classical Aristotelian theories closely. A morally healthy atmosphere prevails as good wins out; and, although a heroine suffers as a consequence of her imperfection, she attains a more noble stature by gaining a type of victory in defeat (Bases 8-10). For Anderson, then, identity is grounded in a moral principle and to be authentic means to become aware of and to act on a spiritually superior self.

With varying degrees of success other dramatists attempted, as did Anderson, to adapt poetry to the type of realism the early modern era demanded. Another contemporary playwright, T.S. Eliot, tried to balance elements of poetic language with dramatic action, meeting with limited success. From Murder in the Cathedral (1935) to The Elder Statesman (1959), his canon marks a conscientious effort to make poetic drama popular to modern audiences and is a standard against which others are measured. A self-professed Classicist/Anglican/ Royalist, Eliot believed that an artist imposed order on experience to depict a spiritual quest for identity, but he placed more faith in language to accomplish that purpose than was dramatically feasible: he never fully accomplished his goal of giving the common man, so important on the realistic stage, a poetic voice. His faith in poetry to carry the action was borne out when the Canterbury Festival audience eagerly received Murder, but that enthusiasm

diminished by the time he wrote *The Elder Statesman*. If we were to search this early modern period for a playwright who does combine the ideal aesthetic spirit of Eliot's verse poetry with the relevant realism of Ibsen's theatre we would find Maxwell Anderson.

Like Eliot, Anderson believes in the perfectability of man and the efficacy of literature to foster human perfection. Unlike Eliot's Anglican Classicism, however, Anderson's classical humanism manifests itself in the realistically oriented moral view that allowed for more aesthetic flexibility in dramatic expression. In his best plays Anderson never sacrifices dramatic action to poetic vision, never giving audiences stultified characters who do little while saying much. Instead, we see and hear vibrant characters whose realistic life struggles belie circumstance; in the final analysis, as an audience we care more about a Queen Mary than we do a Lord Claverton. As a dramatic strategy, Anderson uses poetry for intense emotional states and prose for expositional purposes, imitating earlier models like Shakespeare by making poetry an organic rather than decorative element (Clark 1084). In his experiment with poetic drama that parallels Eliot's, Anderson saw toward the end of his career his verse efforts "disintegrating into prose" because audiences no longer wanted to hear the "music" of stage poetry (Avery 315-16). This experience, however, reflects more the inexorable approach of the modern age and less the failure of one early modern writer to forestall it.

Through their language and action taken in response to it, two characters in this play, Queen Elizabeth of England and Queen Mary of Scotland, effectively illustrate Anderson's working out of identity. In Part I, I discuss how he develops Elizabeth's character by showing her method of using language manipulatively, to protect a false, public self threatened by

her rival Mary. Part II shows how her language of seeming reveals Elizabeth's partial identity predicated on the attributed social role to which she has sacrificed her private self. In Part II, I demonstrate how Anderson moves Mary into a public sphere much like Elizabeth's, where, through loss and suffering, she learns not to accede to a limited identity. Finally, Part IV indicates that Mary discovers her own authenticity by using poetic language to explore possible action for her self, both in the public and the private areas of her life.

Part I: Language as Rhetorical Strategy

Anderson gives the character Elizabeth the means she needs, through language, to influence Scottish subjects into accepting their queen Mary as a whore whose life of lechery made her unworthy to remain queen. In the public forum where Elizabeth has chosen to engage Mary in political combat, Elizabeth has "governed well" because she has retained and strengthened her power in England by seeing to it that Mary has lost hers in Scotland. Long before the climactic moment in Act III when each woman sees the truth about the other, however, Elizabeth had conceived a plan of action and set it into motion. When the two queens finally face one another in this scene, it seems that Elizabeth has gained the upper hand over Mary and that all her efforts to destroy her younger cousin have succeeded. Elizabeth says, "it will be said of me that I governed well, / and wisely, but of you, cousin, that your life/shot through with ill-loves, batted

on lechery, made / you / an ensign of evil." 2 In the game of politics, Arthur Tees has commented, Elizabeth is "ruthless and unscrupulous" (59).

In his development of Elizabeth's character, Anderson has her use language as a rhetorical tool to persuade others to believe that Mary is a whore, an "ensign of evil." The Scots themselves would depose Mary, Elizabeth thinks, if the force of the whore image were so great that her presence on the throne would become repugnant to them. In Act I, sc.ii, we hear this reasoning process as Elizabeth sits in the pre-dawn darkness of her study with her trusted advisor Lord Burghley. The subject of their earnest conversation is the newly returned to Scotland Mary Stuart, Elizabeth's perceived adversary and pretender to the English throne. Burghley summarizes the situation succinctly when he says, "For in so far as she is secure in Scotland you are insecure in England" (17). But Elizabeth knows this. And what she does now is seize upon the news that Mary "has a name for coquetry and smiling," a reputation for being openly friendly, especially with men. If indeed a queen could be "led to destroy herself," Elizabeth thinks out loud, then Mary's "French manners" could be exaggerated into a "name for wantonness and loose behavior"(21). Elizabeth wants not only to take Mary's power away; she wants this enemy ruined, her people turned against her. Only her total destruction will do. Commenting on Elizabeth's nature, Allan Halline observes that there are "few redeeming features" that offset her cruel plans for Mary (74).

Because he wants to demonstrate how fertile and cunning a mind she has, Anderson initiates imagery of carnal sensuality, imagery that will be used later by her proxy John Knox directly to impel the actions of others. Returning to Elizabeth's study, then, we hear Burghley's report from their spy in the Scottish court, saying that the dour Scots construe Mary's highly

spirited behavior as unseemly in a queen. Aware that Mary's cultural (French) and religious (Catholic) peculiarities have made her doubly suspect in her subjects' eyes, Elizabeth needs only to hear about Mary's not "scanting to lend her eyes or hands or tongue to a kind of nimble and facile exchange of smiles and greetings" (20) to seize and enlarge upon these sensual images that Mary projects, transforming them into those of perverse sexuality. She has already expressed her belief that language empowers: "we shall set tongues wagging about her" (21), she says of Mary, and "give the word to drop here, the rumor started there" (24). Now she will use that power to make Mary appear to have "a false hearty and a hollow faith" (21) by seeing to it that Mary enters into a marriage with a "fool," so that he can help ruin her reputation. Among the lies that she expects the Scots to believe are that Mary is a "voluptuary, a scavenger of dirty loves, a bedder with grooms" (24) and that she is "tainted in blood, given over to lechery and infamous pleasures. . .insatiable in desire" (24). These word pictures conjure up a vision of one whose senses have gone awry, of a woman whose lasciviousness brands her a whore. If Elizabeth has her way, then, Mary's full blown public image of whore, false but based upon a kernel of truth, will cause the Scots themselves to depose her.

Having plotted the downfall in her imagination, Elizabeth now needs to put her plan into action. Since she cannot afford publicly to oppose Mary, she will need another person in Scotland itself to effect her plan. His name is Knox, she says, and he can be instrumental in promoting this image of Mary as whore. Over Burghley's objections, she plans to use facets of Mary's actual character--her gay manner, her religious affiliation, even her pride in heritage--against her. She will do this primarily by seeing to it that Mary's "acts and sayings may be misconstrued" (24). At this point,

she launches into a particularly vituperative portrait of Mary: "she will be known," says Elizabeth, "as double-tongued, a demon with an angel's face. . . an emissary of Rome, a prophetess of evil addicted to lascivious rites and poisonous revenges" (24). Anderson chooses to give these harsh, religiously based images of sexual perversity to Elizabeth, to show her slipping into the idiom that Knox himself will later use, thereby reinforcing her duplicity for us. As we shall soon see, Knox enacts in his language what Elizabeth has planned in hers.

Who is this John Knox that Elizabeth sees as such a strong potential tool to be used in her plays? First, historically we know him to be a reformer who sees himself as called to evangelize others. Second, he is a "reformed" Catholic who has been on the inside but has become the firebrand accuser of the insiders. Third, he is a Calvinist whose moral sternness and spiritual inflexibility allow for no nuance: he sees only the evil in those he opposes. And, finally, because of his Reformist Calvinist nature based on the Old Testament world view, he sees material evil as originating in the woman Eve, and by extension all her female descendents. Since these historical traits contribute to an audience's appreciation of the character Knox, Anderson knows that Knox can bring that much more evangelical zeal as well as spiritual authority and singleminded dedication to any campaign Elizabeth mounts against Mary. During this play, Knox does prove a formidable opponent to Mary, as well as a formidable ally to Elizabeth. Although he comes to his opposition of Mary from a perspective divergent from Elizabeth's, in his use of language, especially those images drawn from the Old Testament, Knox closely parallels Elizabeth in his view of Mary.

In the nighttime scene at a Scottish pier that opens the play, Knox himself creates an image of a whore, a woman devoted to and corrupted by sensual pleasure. This image will soon fire the public imagination, thereby carrying out Elizabeth's plan. Even before Mary herself has entered the scene, a tall bearded man comes onto the pier to await the queen's arrival in Scotland. His first words--"aye, dicing, gaming, cards, drinking, dancing, whoring" (4)--charge the innocent guards with "papistical uses of the flesh." In a speech replete with imagery tied to the wicked sensuality of women, Knox castigates Mary's "white face," her honey dripping mouth, her smells of sweet perfumes, her "milk white body" and her "tongue of music" (5-6). Taken together these words represent all five senses and paint a portrait of the whore who entices an unsuspecting man with her sensual corruptness. He says her outward attractiveness is "set upon her like a sign," a reference to his belief that she is less a person and more an emblem of both the seductress and the Church of Rome. So in this first speech, even before he has actually met Mary, his words echo those of Elizabeth that we have already heard, especially those touching on Mary's lechery, insatiable desire, and lascivious rites. In Elizabeth's case, intent was clear in that hers was a fallacious public image of Mary, built upon lies. Knox, on the other hand, believes that what he says of Mary is true, based as it is upon his own infallible knowledge about woman's evil nature. Combined with his powerfully imagistic rhetoric, this dogmatism is what makes him so useful to Elizabeth.

In the above speech, Anderson has Elizabeth's proxy Knox caution other characters about the temptation they face by having him use specific imagery tied to perverse sensuality. Knox rants about whoremongering by those in authority, a theme inspired by Revelations. Analogously, while the

writer of Revelations symbolically denounces the evil that he sees in first century Rome, Knox in his next speeches castigates the evil that he sees emanating from the sixteenth-century Church in Rome. When Mary steps onto Scottish soil for the first time as queen, the Reverend Knox attacks her, albeit obliquely, by denouncing those with ties to the Catholic Church. He says,

And when they come they will bring excellent devices of masks and ornament to deceive the eye, and soft words and stench to cumber the senses of mankind. Adulterers, jig-masters and the like will come in authority, and their counsel will be whoring and carousing, the flowers and the fruits of evil, of that great sin,

that sin eats at the heart of the world. . . the Church of Rome. . . (9)

When he had yet to see the woman Mary, Knox thought it best to attack her personally, calling upon imagery of whoredom to denounce her character. Now that she stands before him, however, he speaks in the third person. One can visualize from his speech the artificially made-up whore with her mask-like, powdered and painted face. With the word "adulterers" Knox distances his personal attack, instead building his case against the Church. In a clear causal relationship, Knox attributes imminent disaster to a Catholic source: he says that those who come into authority--read "queen Mary" here--will by their nature ("adulterer") and their deeds ("whoring and carousing") manifest the origin of evil on earth, "the Church of Rome." When the influential Elizabeth called Mary the "prophetess of Rome," she had cleverly anticipated those images used now by the minister who has become the English queen's unwitting accomplice. In this first scene Knox uses imagery both to persuade (the soldiers to denounce her) and to warn (Mary that hell lies ahead).

Unlike in Revelations, where spiritual power wins out over evil, Knox's victory will be delayed, at least for a while, since this theologian addicted to religious symbolism is undone by the frank nature and irresistible charm of the flesh-and-blood Mary. The fact that the old man acquiesces to Mary--he "bows stiffly over her hand" when she offers it to him in friendship--by no means diminishes the force of his language. As will be seen later, many in Scotland are persuaded, as Knox is himself, about the truth of these images. It is precisely because Elizabeth needs someone who passionately believes that they are true and can persuade others of that fact, that Knox serves her purpose.

Knox's unwillingness to compromise his religious beliefs will bring about just what Elizabeth had envisioned: a fierce uprising against a faithless queen. But, before then, he will have difficulty in carrying out, even unintentionally, Elizabeth's plan, since in his next meeting with the young sovereign the older reformer is forced to change strategy several times, adjusting himself to his now unyielding opponent. Whereas Mary formerly confessed herself to be young, naive and helpless, she now faces her persecutor as a mature monarch, able to take care of herself. At first confining himself to facts about Mary's giving her Catholic husband the crown matrimonial and setting up an altar in the palace, Knox goes on, however, to infer that she practices "idolatrous rites," brings dissension, thrusts her faith upon Scots who do not share it, and wants to further the cause of Catholicism in the land (75). "Though it cost civil war and the slaughter of brother by brother," he says, those who worship in the "one true faith" will not bear these practices that undermine it (75). He resurrects now some of the hell fire imagery heard earlier, in order to persuade her through his terrifying rhetoric to turn from an impending

fate: the idolator and the adulterer will be "weeded out . . before they come to the great pit and are given over to his unending fire" (75).

In actuality the battle in this second scene has really been waged between Elizabeth and Mary, with Knox as a pawn. Overpowering him with her intellectual ability, Mary steadily negates his argument by pointing out the fallacies inherent in it. Seeing the world devoid of grey areas as Knox does makes him more comfortable with lapses in logic. But he also runs the risk of being called on them, as Mary does when, despairing of countering his arguments with logic, she puts decorum aside and holds a mirror of reality up to Knox, telling him he is an elderly, provincially educated fanatic who has lately married his young niece. "I call ruin to fall on this house," he counters, seeing the young queen past all hope.

Because of his belief in the truth of this lie, Knox can still be used by Elizabeth because of his powerful influence among his countrymen. His use as a tool is discussed, again in Elizabeth's study at Whitehead, first as having the potential to destroy Mary and then as having played a large part in bringing about her personal and political ruin. Elizabeth seizes upon interim events as being potentially helpful to her cause: Mary's husband's murder has followed her secretary's Rizzio's, with Mary tentatively planning to marry her lover Bothwell. Elizabeth instructs her minister, "Send next to John Knox, / But do this cleverly, giving Knox evidence / that Bothwell slew Darnley with the queen's connivance / And they bed together in blood" (104). This last image echoes to Act I, sc.ii, when Elizabeth first plotted against her enemy and said that Mary would be "tainted in blood" and a "bedder of grooms." Mindful that he has previously provided her with the voice through which she could speak, Elizabeth will again use the unsuspecting Knox, and especially his hatred for Mary, to propagate a lie

(Mary instigated Darnley's murder). As she gives the order, Elizabeth knows her plan will be a sure-fire success, and she will be the beneficiary of this turn of events.

Images of Mary's sensuality, first shown by Anderson as being incubated in Elizabeth's mind, find life and power through Knox, so much so that Mary's own men have by Act II betrayed her and given her up to her enemies. The queen's forces have been defeated, largely because of Knox's powerful rhetoric. "This was John Knox's battle," Huntley recounts: "The auld limmer [scoundrel] took a stance on a hill some half-mile to windward and there he stood haranguing like the angel Gabriel swearing Bothwell killed Darnley to have the queen" (107). An almost exact paraphrase of Elizabeths' original orders, these words evidence the power of her influence over others. Mary prepares herself at this point to be imprisoned when she sees Knox appear in the archway. To his audience, the rhetorically minded preacher yells, "Pluck down the whore! Pluck her down, this contamination of men" (120). As he stands there facing the vanquished queen, the audience hears the language of another queen pleased with their mutual victory. Queen Elizabeth, through Knox, seems to have prevailed, at least for now.

When we examine Anderson's use of the whore image to show Elizabeth's considerable influence, we see first the potential then the actual power that language has to persuade that appearance truthfully mirrors internal character. Elizabeth conceives and, through Knox, attributes the image of whore to Mary--an attributed self fabricated from a kernel of truth through a powerfully rhetorical use of language that impels others to believe and act on it. Underlying this successful effort, of course, is Elizabeth's belief that men do indeed presume that outward appearance

reflects internal reality. This belief is part of a matrix of values that closely intertwine, becoming offshoots of one another. At about the same time that we hear the character set up her smear campaign against Mary, we also hear her initiate another language pattern of duplicity that grows out of a belief in deception as a viable mode of action.

Part II: The Language of Seeming

Where Elizabeth creates the whore image for Mary, another strain of language reveals not only her mode of action but how Elizabeth perceives herself. Initially imageless, Elizabeth's "language of seeming" becomes more revelatory of Elizabeth's hollow interior predicated on a public self as it grows more figurative. "Always, and above all," Elizabeth says early on of Mary, "I am to seem her friend" (25). "Seeming" is at the heart of how Elizabeth views the world. Duplicity rather than authenticity being the hallmark of her words and actions, she uses language of seeming both as a philosophy and a motivation to act. As she hears Burghley out and gets a fix on Mary's weaknesses, in Act I, sc. ii, Elizabeth gathers information and formulates strategy. Revealing little at first about her self or her values, she speaks of plans to "make it appear" that Mary's French manners indicate the heart of a whore (21), appearance here being emblematic more of the deceit on Elizabeth's part than of any weakness on Mary's. Taking a role as an actress does, she will dangle a disastrous marriage candidate in Scotland, letting it "go abroad" that she favors someone else and is "determined against it" (23). When she speaks of using

"devices" so Mary's "acts and sayings may be misconstrued and a net of half-lies woven about her" (24), we hear that a pattern of duplicity has grown up out of these words. Elizabeth fully expresses her belief that one must use deceit to hide intention when she tells Burghley that, no matter what schemes they devise behind the scenes, she must never "appear" as a part of them. As Gerald Rabkin has put it, Elizabeth's commitment to the principle of expediency has made her "remorseless and adaptable" (275).

Anderson demonstrates in her language Elizabeth's evident belief that only the attributed self matters--what is "said" of her--and, as long as she can manipulate what others think of her, she can maintain control over her own destiny. Now, at the end of this remarkable scene in which Elizabeth has spoken frankly about the destructive motives that she will disguise behind a friendly "appearance," she senses that Burghley may have some qualms about using such duplicitous methods. She remarks, "You would say that I am in myself more nearly what will be said of her" (25, *italics mine*). Touching here on the subject of self for the first time, she answers her own half-question with characteristic frankness when she says, "Why, perhaps," acknowledging the possibility that she has a "false heart" engendering duplicitous behavior. "Whatever I may be," she ends the scene by telling Burghley, "it shall be said only that I am the queen of England, and that I rule well" (25, *italics mine*). Plainly, Elizabeth's main concern does not lie in openly revealing her essential self to the world; instead, she chooses to hide behind a facade of "appearance" in order that she may protect herself and her power.

As we saw in the working through of the whore image strain, Elizabeth will need a substitute to carry out her duplicitous schemes, if she is to preserve her facade of neutrality. Just as John Knox had fulfilled this role

for her previously, now Lord Throgmorton goes to Mary's court to carry out Elizabeth's plans as they were outlined in Act I, sc. ii. From this point until Act III, Elizabeth appears very little in the play, but the influence of her manipulating can be felt throughout. If Mary is to be cozened into bringing about her own ruin, then Throgmorton must act the part of "friend," just as his mistress would if she were there. He speaks privately about Elizabeth to an ally:

She bids me to tell you
as if from herself, you are not to be disturbed
If her policy seems at variance with her mind.
It's a wide arc of intrigue, but she carries
These schemes in her hand like a gambit, and she means
To play it to the end. (48-49)

His words, as if from Elizabeth herself, perfectly describe her public image that "seems at variance" with her private intent. By using "wide arc of intrigue" and "gambit"--these last implying the broad scope of her calculated plans--Throgmorton puts a false face upon baser motives.

During this brief sub-scene between Mary and Throgmorton, Elizabeth's presence can be palpably felt behind her courtier's words. Although he proffers himself as a "plain man" of business who speaks "quite frankly," in reality he does accomplish Elizabeth's intentions by urging Mary, first, to consider changing her religion and, second, to marry the Earl of Leicester. Both suggestions, deliberately chosen as to be seen by Mary as outrageous, achieve their purpose by raising her ire. She would, of course, never consider either. But Elizabeth, knowing this and hoping for such a reaction, now sees her "gambit" carried much further when Mary decides to fly in the face of her cousin's wishes. Words that we know are

duplicitously motivated--"plain" and "frank" among them--have through her spokesman Throgmorton, accomplished what Elizabeth intended, as well as evidenced the considerable power she wields, even when she is absent.

In both Acts I and II, Elizabeth plainly reveals herself, in a language of seeming that is virtually imageless but resonant with references to her belief in duplicity: she is a manipulator of men, a ruler who will preserve power at all costs. But when we see her finally, in Act III, she moves closer to a recognition of her own partially realized identity through a use of language that grows more laden figuratively as it becomes more self-revelatory. Queen Mary has been imprisoned for a month in England, ignorant of the fact that her cousin and "friend" detains her, when the two actually meet for the first time. During their long scene together Elizabeth, through her language of seeming, adapts herself to changing situations by taking the roles of older sister, confidante, wiser older woman, and one who has been falsely accused. Until now she has used others to wear her masks for her, but here Elizabeth herself must project an "appearance" that will convince Mary to abdicate and thereby carry through her "gambit."

In order to reveal Elizabeth's stunted identity, Anderson has her use imagistic language of the face, a key strand that will later juxtapose her character to that of Mary. This image captures Elizabeth's imagination when she first sees Mary. She calls her "beautiful," remarking on her "Stuart mouth/and the high forehead," and comparing her influence in Scotland to that of Helen in Troy: "I think there's been / No queen so fair to look on" (139-140), she says. A tone of bitterness steals into Elizabeth's comparison of Mary to Helen of Troy, signifying her underlying belief that a woman's worth is unfairly tied, first, to the beauty of her appearance and,

second, to the match she makes in marriage. Evidence of this last belief can be found in her first scene with Burghley, when she says, "a woman's mind and spirit are no better than those of the man she lies under in the night" (21). Now Elizabeth refers bitterly to the indelible frown lines between her own brows, lines that "no wash or ointments" will remove, apparently accepting the notion that only a woman's youthful beauty signifies value.

But to Elizabeth it is not just any face that holds importance; it is Mary's, one that for her signifies something more than beauty. Elizabeth remarks, " 'Brightness falls from the air/queens have died young and fair. . . . ' Brightness falls from them, but not from you yet" (140), indicating that Mary's facial beauty--her outward "brightness"-- mirrors an internal beauty to which Elizabeth, being who she has chosen to be, has no access. Actually she has been obsessed with Mary's face, and with the beauty of it, for some time because she made reference to it in her first scene, by hoping that marriage to Darnley would "spoil her beauty." Later, when Mary has undergone considerable tribulation, Elizabeth observes, "She [Mary] begins to wear a little, no doubt," an outcome devoutly to be wished. Before actually seeing Mary, she had expressed bitterness and jealousy at Mary's being called beautiful and, we can surmise, at her life with Bothwell.

Anderson gives shape to Elizabeth's emotional history by having her now say, "I came to my throne as you did. . . beset as you were / with angry factions--and came there young, loving / truth, / as you did" (142), a reference to former beliefs abandoned after experiencing queenship. "I'm so old by now / I n shuffling tricks and the huckstering of souls / for lands and pensions," she continues. "I learned to play it young, / must learn it or die" (142). In what for her is highly figurative language, Elizabeth shows how she took direct action in becoming a master of deceit ("shuffling" and

"huckstering") because of her belief that her survival depended on it. At this point she gives advice, patterned on beliefs forged in the fire of long years of experience:

It's thus if you would rule;
 Give up good faith, the word that goes with the heart,
 the heart that clings where it loves. Give these up, and
 love
 where your interest lies, and should your interest change
 Let your love follow it quickly. (142)

By subtly shifting her mode of language, Anderson allows Elizabeth to let down her guard in order to reveal her beliefs succinctly; political power ("interest") must take preeminence, and the use of deception ("let love follow") best preserves it. Because she has lived her life in the service of ruling well, though this "porridge" of living duplicitously on only the public level may be difficult to swallow, "a queen must eat it," or so says this particular queen.

Although we have been aware of Elizabeth as an apparent self from the very first, just now Mary unravels the skein of truth from the complex circumstance of Elizabeth's duplicity. For the first time Mary hears not only what Elizabeth says, but the malice of intent behind her words: "Stay now a moment. I begin to glimpse / behind this basilisk mask of yours. It was this / you've wanted from the first" (145). "Basilisk" here associates Elizabeth with the evil half-serpent whose look could kill, an image ironically applied to her since it has been her words that have proven most lethal. Mary uses the word "mask," not so much meaning a device for hiding truth as meaning that truth does appear before her, in the mask-like image Elizabeth has worn so long that political duplicity has become her

only reality. She now is the mask since, for the English queen, acting has forged her identity.

Having Elizabeth drop all pretense and deception now, however briefly, Anderson exposes in her an incomplete identity by using language to reveal as yet unexplored self awareness. Responding to Mary's almost sorrowful question about how she could have been so mistaken, Elizabeth says, "you were not mistaken / I am all women I must be" (147). When she says she is "all women" she must be, Elizabeth refers to her beliefs in duplicity evolving from necessity when she came to power and chose to "rule well." She describes three aspects of her self, the first one "a young girl, / young and harrowed...one who could weep / to see you [Mary] here" (147). This first "woman" she has spoken of before, when she told Mary about coming to the throne, "young, loving truth," only to learn that that aspect of herself could not exist while playing the political game of maintaining power at all costs. So Elizabeth chose to stifle that part of herself before it could be played out as an identity. Now we can hear the regret in her words at the loss of a dimension of self that could have brought innocence and empathy to her character.

The second "woman" Elizabeth describes is faced with a "bitterness at what I have lost and can never have" (147). This expression of the self involves the woman as lover and its attendant wife/mother roles. She has been roused to the most intense emotional states when faced with evidence of Mary's success in these areas of a woman's life, those passions in one instance giving rise to language that imaged Mary's face. Elizabeth has poisoned her own wells and this expression of "loss" lends emotional depth to her disclosure of self. Alfred Shivers has remarked that Elizabeth's

actions are motivated out of bitterness that, while she herself sacrificed personally to serve publicly, Mary had not (82).

Having exposed Elizabeth's truncated self, Anderson has her continue to the third "woman," the "basilisk" that Mary has just recently discovered. "This last stands guard / and I obey it," she says. Emotional heat generated by her being truthful now cools as we feel the chilling effect of this most powerful aspect of herself, the one which we know controls her. This last signifies the Elizabeth who single-mindedly "rules well," the one evolved from a nexus of damaging, stultifying beliefs that she chose to adapt after coming to power. For only the second time, and this the last, Elizabeth uses language that has welled up and become more imagistic as it becomes more revelatory of the self. In this speech, she agrees with the truth of Mary's "mask" image of her, overlaying it with her own consciousness and making it all the more revealing. She admits to being the mask that she wears, a queen essentially enslaved to the public self that she has chosen to live out, at some cost to the full potential of her self.

Through the language of these speeches, Anderson allows us to glimpse behind Elizabeth's facade to an internal dissonance that has been kept quiet through sheer force of will. Because she has predicated her identity solely on the public aspect of self, Elizabeth admits that her own mask has become emblematic of who she is. Over the years, she has learned to mask her bitterness, frustration and fear, being whatever duplicitous face she deemed appropriate. But now Mary's contrasting "face" of authenticity by its very nature threatens Elizabeth's only claim to identity, the queen who rules well. "It was you or I," she tells Mary, expressing the most basic equation possible. "The one of us must win / And I must always win" (147). These last four words, spoken as they have been from the heart and mind of a

woman who has forfeited a good part of self to remain queen, speaks to her essential self. Briefly having allowed for some self-revelation through imagistic language, the queen regains her composure and from this point until the end of the play, Elizabeth presents only her most formidable and forceful self--the one who "stands guard"--in opposition to the seemingly hopelessly over-matched Mary.

Part III: Language as Partial Identity

In contrast to the values with which Anderson animates Elizabeth's character--especially those that motivate her duplicitous actions--Mary's values reflect a code of personal integrity, a consistency between what she believes about God and other men and the way she acts in the world. Because she is an idealist with faith in God and trust in man's goodness, Mary will not, cannot, act deceptively, even when such failures to deceive weaken or destroy her own chances for political success or personal happiness. Commenting that Mary "does not see through every situation clearly," Allan Halline also notes that she wavers in making decisions because of her ambitions for power (74). Indeed, conflicting traits like ambition, pride, honesty, and trust that contribute to the imperfect essential self cause her to make disastrous decisions that bring harm to her and others. But Mary must learn from suffering what it means to be an idealist in a materialistic society that more closely resembles Elizabeth's world view than her own. From this suffering, she learns that, from a rooted sense of self, she can create an identity based upon a more realistic assessment of

both what other men are and what she can become. She discovers, in short, that all men are not inherently good and that she herself can be more than simply a public self, the Stuart queen.

In order to show Mary's growth toward wholeness, Anderson has her at first take an outwardly oriented view of her self, one dedicated to external accomplishment. While in this queenly mode, Mary becomes more exclusively identified with one part of herself, her pride in royal heritage. Language that Anderson uses to define her self while on that path, moreover, clusters around image patterns of the hand, blood, time and space. While Mary adopts this pride-filled, royal role, these patterns dominate, interweaving into a pattern that expresses a partial identity very like Elizabeth's. Unlike Elizabeth, however, who forcefully uses language to manipulate, Mary explores action with it in order to orient herself in the world and to create an authentic self, one that exhibits congruence between belief and behavior.

The hand image, besides showing Mary's open friendliness when she extends it to others like Knox and Elizabeth, also illustrates pride in the identity of queen. Through most of Act I, sc. iii, hand imagery reflects pride in queenship, as she struggles to assert her rule in the face of her growing love for Bothwell, whom she sees as a threat to the style of ruling she has in mind. "If I gave my hand / to you," she tells Bothwell, "I shall be pledged to rule by wrath / and violence" (36). Representing that part of the female self that can be given over to the male in marriage, the hand extended to Bothwell would, to Mary, be surrendered to his turbulent temperament. When Mary also tells him about her hand and life-- "I have but lease on it, / Myself. It's not my own," (38)-- she expresses her deeply held belief that her public destiny as queen of Scotland, and perhaps

England, outweighs any desires she might have for her private life. A bit later she shows her awareness of the metonymical worth of the hand in the world of power politics, when she informs her ministers that she knows of "no prince or king whose hand is offered/and whose hand [she'd] take" (40). References to the hand that reflect Mary's image of queen abate somewhat during the rest of this scene, but when Mary does decide to pledge her troth at the end of it she uses the word "hand" to tell Darnley of her decision.

Blood supplants hand in the next scene with Elizabeth's emissary Throgmorton. Because she sees the preservation of her birth role of queen as her primary concern, this role dictates her choice of men to whom she will give her "hand, " or power over how she will live that role. She feels so threatened by efforts to cut her off from her birthright that only blood imagery could express her emotional kinship with the concept of royal heritage. In response to Elizabeth's "suggestion," transmitted through Throgmorton, that she choose a Protestant husband, Mary retorts, "I marry where I please. . . I abate not one jot of my good blood's lien / on the English throne. . . I shall rather strengthen it if I can. The least worthy sovereign / has a duty toward his [sic] blood" (55). Blood imagery in these lines lends a forceful, literal dimension to Mary's growing awareness that her right to both thrones might be threatened by forces opposing her. By saying that she will not curtail her legal right of heritage ("blood") to the English throne, seeking instead to strengthen it, Mary expresses an ambition born of pride that will set her on a course toward marrying a man for political expediency. Strengthening her royal privilege translates for Mary into marrying the man whose own lineage will best secure those now-

threatened rights for her. At the close of this audience, she has stepped further toward replicating Elizabeth's one-dimensional existence.

In order to manifest Mary's fear of dissolution as queen at the hands of forces outside herself, Anderson invents an equivalent, in blood imagery, to her sense of pride. As the present Stuart monarch, Mary evidently feels the burden of becoming a conduit through which the glorious past might infuse the future with greatness. The pivotal figure in the continuation of the line, Mary is provided with a powerful symbol through which she hears her resolve heightened and strengthened as she speaks. Words become a means for pursuing internal and external congruence, for "blood" signifies the closest physical entity to Mary's identity that language will allow. Faced with what she sees as mounting aggression designed to undermine her power and security, the queen's resolve strengthens so that she says "the royal blood's in me." The blood is in her and the blood is her, so closely does she now identify herself with that part of her that is royal. "I am jealous of this my Stuart blood," she goes on to say, "Jealous of what it has meant in Scotland, jealous/of what it may mean" (60). These words echo those of Elizabeth when she first plotted, in Act I, sc. ii, against Mary. At that time she said that Mary would marry "to staunch that Stuart blood" (23), showing first how one prideful woman understands that trait in another, and second how the crafty Tudor queen could anticipate the actions of the less experienced Stuart.

Now that her heritage has been threatened, she makes a decision to act by choosing a husband. On the threshold of taking this significant action, Mary seems to be choosing Elizabeth's identity. Pursuing political necessity over personal happiness, Mary decides, like Elizabeth, to confirm and act upon that part of her that urgently wants to preserve royal power. She

places pride before love, a decision that will reverberate disastrously into the near future and bring just the violence she had sought to avoid. By marrying her cousin Darnley, she strengthens Stuart claims to the English throne; however, by the same token, she yokes herself to an inferior specimen of a man, thereby testing the validity of the theory that a woman's destiny lies in the character of her husband. Arthur Tees notes that her choice of Darnley as husband is the turning point in the play (55), and W.S. Clark remarks that the central crisis in the play is her realization that her marriage to Darnley was an error (1085). Motivated by her ambition to strengthen her role as queen, Mary chose not to give herself where she has loved, thereby disregarding the womanly, private aspect of self.

Pride in lineage and idealism about human nature conflict so much within her that Mary will have to endure suffering and loss before she will become able to reconsider some of her beliefs enough to change her actions. Seeing her secretary Rizzio's lifeblood flowing from him after he is murdered, Mary at first blames her husband for playing into her enemies' hands, something she had done by marrying him in the first place. She says, "From this time forward if I touch your hand / May God blight me and my child" (91), using the word "hand" in this instance in nightmarish opposition to the way she had used it earlier: where once Mary had pledged fidelity to Darnley with her hand, signifying a union between the two predicated on the comingling of blood to secure the throne, now she emphasizes that both she and the child--a product of this union of hand and blood--will shun this man who helped cause Rizzio's death.

Where once Mary conceived of blood as an abstraction (her lineage), now its physical reality presses upon her. During this scene with Rizzio she uses blood imagery, not to empower her resolve to carry on the Stuart line,

but to begin facing the enormity of both the present and future consequences of her actions. When all the traitors leave, Mary and her ladies-in-waiting remain to tend Rizzio's body. Less of Mary as queen and more of her as woman emerges as she faces an ordeal of sorrow brought on by the realization that she has been largely responsible for the death of her trusted confidante. As a sorrowful friend she suggests that they lift him and place him on her bed, a simple act, but one that indicates the level at which she feels this pain. Forgetting the royal decorum that she has tried so long to sustain, she helps take up the body as if she were any other woman. At this point Beaton, one of her ladies, warns her that Rizzio's blood could stain her dress, prompting Mary to think about this disastrous aftermath of her actions. Speaking of Rizzio's death, she says, "This will bring more blood after. . . . There will be many men lie so for me. . . . Slain, and each one / with blood to spill but once" (93). Blood here images the inner turmoil she now feels. Her plan to strengthen her bloodline has misfired, causing the sorrow that she can only approximate through language. At Rizzio's death, Rabkin says, Mary comes to realize that "goodness is not enough. . . the fact of evil is an inescapable element in the universe" (276).

As Mary looks at this literal blood, then, her previous concern with connectedness to both past and future Stuarts becomes a catastrophic vision, empowered by blood imagery. She sees herself steeped in blood, stepping "from life to life/Till there are thousands dead. . . till the heart faints and sickens." "My soul," she says, "is aghast at this blood spilled for me" (93). Forced by Rizzio's death to look within, Mary finds herself wanting and condemns herself with these words just as surely as Knox had done earlier. The depth at which she now suffers can be measured by the language she uses: "faints," "sickens" and "aghast" are humanly felt

consequences of spilt blood. So strongly has her mind taken hold of that imagery that one death--David Rizzio's--converts itself into thousands.

As Anderson has used hand and blood imagery to represent her concept of a queenly self, so images of time and space augment them as he shows her learning that the queenship without love will not work in her life the way it has in Elizabeth's. Ultimately all these language strains--hand, blood, time and space--modulate and change function as Mary uses the latter images to help her see choices for acting out the role of lover. In both roles, of course, she will learn more about her identity through interaction with another.

For Mary, as it has been for Elizabeth, attention to time reflects a heightened state of mind. In addition, through spatial language we hear her work through early fears about choosing to form a bond with Bothwell. Imagery expressing the tightly controlled, compartmentalized nature of her life builds the impression that Mary has given herself to the pressing duties of queen, an impression she corroborates when she enters, in Act I, sc. ii, to find Lord Bothwell impatiently cooling his heels in an antechamber, awaiting an audience with the queen who has become his beloved. He enters, only to be told by her ladies-in-waiting that she is "closeted" with her secretary and that, since she has "spaced this day off into hours, so many to each," he will not be allowed to see her (30). Because there has been great pressure on her time, she has none for Bothwell. Since she presently feels the pressure of her job, time constricts in her mind as these pressures mount. Attempting to dismiss the hot-tempered Bothwell, telling him, "We've spoken together, though I had no time to give" (34), she suggests that the bonds forming between them may have to be severed. Just a few moments later she does indeed preclude the possibility of a

relationship with him, saying "Our day has come between us" (35). This line compactly intertwines the temporal ("day") with the spatial ("between") to express the conclusion to which she has come: she will live out her days without him beside her. They are, she fears, philosophically and temperamentally unsuited. Asking him to leave, she says they have been "seen too much together" (38). But now, as the queen chooses the limited identity of one who rules competently, she literally and figuratively separates herself from him, seating herself on her "chair of state" as others enter. Mary has imaged in this scene a public self, the Queen of Scots, having been impelled by language that will lead her to disastrous action.

Just as Anderson modulates hand and blood imagery during crisis, so his temporal and spatial language in scenes between the lovers indicates the process whereby Mary learns about identity through her relationship with Bothwell. The intertwining of these motifs becomes emblematic, also, during scenes of strong emotional intensity when these two come together and separate. Gaining strength as the couple rediscover one another, temporal and spatial language proliferates at the end of Act II, when they reach the apex of their time together.

Numbed because of her own unwitting complicity in Rizzio's murder, Mary feels a disconsolateness that we can hear in the words "no" and "nothing," an impression strengthened by the temporal "never." "Between us," a spatial reference, expresses her perception that no words can now bring her and Bothwell together. When Bothwell himself enters, she tells him, "I have not time to talk. . . the time's gone by," convinced that any chance for love has been nullified by her mistake. Also, she says, "It is too late-- / for you and me. These faults we commit have lives / of their own, and bind us to them" (98); temporality indicates her hopelessness. In response

to his comforting words, Mary begins to acquiesce, coming around slowly to believing that he can perhaps help after all. Wanting what he knows is impossible--the queen on her throne and the woman for himself--Bothwell sees that Darnley stands "between" them. "Come no nearer, my lord. It's not ours / to have" (101) she tells him, expressing in spatially keyed language her resignation. "Too late, " she says, her words reverberating through this scene with her potential lover and political ally.

Later, time weighs heavily as it intersects again with spatial referents that strongly suggest Mary's complete acceptance of her female identity as she has experienced it with Bothwell. During the interval Darnley has been murdered by his confreres, Mary has borne a son, she and Bothwell have reconciled and married, and with John Knox's help Moray and the others seem on the verge of defeating the queen's meager forces. Now, as Bothwell strikes a bargain with the usurpers to keep his wife on the throne in exchange for his leaving the country, the lovers meet for the last time. Noting her bad timing, critic Herbert Childs says Mary does not marry Bothwell when she should and later accepts him when she should not (483).

In opposition to the spatial "bonds" in earlier scenes that reflected a relational reality but a political impossibility, spatial language here represents futility. Repeatedly in this scene, Mary steadfastly refuses to relinquish her new-found identity, each time, however, brought closer by her husband to recognizing the reality of their politically weakened situation. In order to reinforce their shared perspective, Anderson in this scene has Bothwell participate with Mary in voicing mutual image patterns which will finally lead her to deeper levels of knowledge and, ultimately, to strength. But she will suffer loss again in order to gain this awareness. After her husband asks to see the queen alone, Mary enters to find that he

has given his word to leave both his country and his wife: "I've accepted exile," he says. "You may keep your crown without me but not with me. . . .What's left we must do apart" (115). Hearing "exile," "without me" and "apart," terms that reinforce the finality of the dissolution of their newly formed union, Mary responds uncharacteristically by suggesting that they raise an army and fight together. Bothwell, however, forces her to look at the future and says, "We lose together. God knows what we'll ever win / Apart" (116). In these lines time ("forever") and space ("together," "apart") interlink in what will become the predominant motif for the separating lovers. In these next minutes the frequency with which language of spatial distance occurs--with words like "parting," "staying" and "I go alone"--tends to build a strained atmosphere around the lovers as Mary faces the possibility of their permanently parting. At this juncture Mary feels the conflict between feelings and duty, between being Bothwell's wife or Scotland's queen. With regard to Mary's marriage to Bothwell, Patrick Rice says that it is her effort to correct her mistake with Darnley by marrying Bothwell that most directly leads to her downfall (369), but this analysis of her action does not take into full account all that she gains from the relationship.

Constricted by pain into acceptance of existential insularity, Mary now moves from emotional despair to spiritual strengthening for which her self-knowledge prepares her. Her husband's reply--"We've spent what time we had. . . .It's likely, we'll not meet again / On this same star" (116)--shot through as it is with references to brevity and shared space, triggers in Mary a disconsolate, elegiac response. "Happiness. . . goes fast / and never comes again. . . . We're alone, alone / alone. . . . Each one dies alone" (116-117), she says, evoking in words the emotional and spiritual diminishment

she feels. Since she knows and feels that time will not expand to meet their needs, her despondency becomes manifest in the repetition of the word "alone."

Anderson initiates for Mary, in this final scene with Bothwell, sensual imagery of touch that echoes hand imagery, thus providing Mary a means of relinquishing the physical dimension of love that she has experienced with her husband. Now, as she prepares to face the reality of separating from him, tactile imagery, along with temporal and spatial language already mentioned, conveys her intense passion for a man from whom she derives strength. Masculine "touch" had once symbolized power to Mary, frightening her. Although the pull of body remained strong, Mary had more urgently felt the need to secure her queenship, since passion could consume her if she gave herself over to Bothwell's barbarous ways. In addition, although the hand image helped her to express queenly pride, it also symbolized her female instinct toward passionate union with the male. In the earlier stages of their courtship, she said, "Since I've been / woman grown / There's been no man save you but I could take/his hand steadily in mine. . . and feel in myself more power / Then [sic] I felt in him" (36), emphasizing the sensual, tactile dimension of the hand. Speaking now of lying "a while / trusted, in arms you trust" (117), Mary combines the sensual with the spatial to express the depth to which they have emotionally as well as physically united. This image of an encircling, assured sensuality based upon mutual faith articulates Mary's beliefs which she now has lived out as Bothwell's lover.

Because this particular couple's actions have national and perhaps universal consequences, Anderson sees that their language expands as their emotions intensify to encompass these matters of moment. When they

use phrases like "the world goes empty" (Mary, 116), their frame of reference widens to the cosmic, the only frame inclusive enough. Sensing her impending loss, Mary's imagination strains to find words that will adequately express her pain as well as find meaning in it. Using language to exert a spiritual control over the material, to find a timelessness within time, she says, "Aye, among all tides / and driftings of air and water it may be / Some dust that once was mine will touch again / Dust that was yours" (117). The pleasurable union of bodies expressed here as "touch" has metamorphosed, transformed into natural elements of the material world. All that remains of the once-bodied lovers is phantasmic touch, devoid of meaning when denied its human context.

Once Mary feared the power inherent in a lover's touch, so much that she refused possible union with him by acting in conformity with queenly duty. And, again, when she felt the pull of body to body, she retreated to philosophy and gave only part of herself to another. Finally, when she was able to act authentically, giving herself to the relationship, she incorporated physical love into the union. Now facing the imminent and all-but-certain dissolution of this physical love, Mary imagines an almost total destruction of their humanity by saying their "dust" could commingle by happenstance. Wholeness within this relationship predicated upon involvement of every aspect of self compels Mary toward wholeness of being, despite loss.

Part IV: The Language of Authenticity

In Act III Anderson slowly gathers image strands into a tapestry that embodies Mary's process of becoming: language becomes a way of knowing

the self as it recasts all her disastrous acts into a victory of achieved authenticity. Mary moves here toward a growing awareness and understanding of whom she has become, as language reflects an honest expression of her striving to integrate her actions with her thoughts and feelings. Unlike the first two acts, notes Vincent Wall, Act III gives Mary adequate time for introspection, so she can fully realize the consequences of her action (346). Viewing the act with an eye to how Mary's language relates to action and how both of these enhance identity, we see that three distinct sections can be isolated for analysis. The first (125-131) finds Queen Mary imprisoned and fearful, waiting to be rescued; but, after finding that Bothwell has been taken prisoner, she continues to hold out hope that she will yet be freed. Second, after a brief audience with her adversaries, during which they ask her to abdicate and she refuses, Mary finally faces Elizabeth herself. She at first yields to the force of her older cousin's personality, but soon she discovers Elizabeth's actual identity (139-151). Finally, when Mary recognizes that her own identity as queen who has loved can overcome her adversary's superior political power, she uses language that ties together all previous strains into a fabric as cohesive as the identity engendering it (151-153).

All experience severely contracts now for her, with space and time telescoped into the perimeters of this room and her agitated mind. As the act opens, Mary sits at a prison window with her maids, looking outward and leaning her head against the bars that constrain her. Because she has endured over a month of prison, her tone suggests urgency. Time weighs heavily and forms thickly in language. Mary's appreciation of the

transitory and finite nature of time, heard now in the metaphors she labors toward, can be traced back to the crucial times in her life when she felt the pain of loss. Before experiencing Rizzio's death and enduring the parting from Bothwell, Mary as queen perceived time as primarily a commodity not to be wasted, an idea much like Elizabeth's. Parting from her husband, she expressed internal devastation by saying the chance for happiness "goes fast and never comes again" (116-117), a philosophical evocation of the limited possibilities of human action within the context of finite time.

Besides understanding finite time she now recognizes and appreciates that past actions are irrecoverable. As she reaches for expression here in Elizabeth's cell, she compares the experience of losing her liberty to losing her lover. "Here in this prison," says Mary "it [life] goes from us quite as much as though we were free" (127). She has learned from Bothwell's leavetaking that time slips away as it is being lived. When Mary hears that Bothwell, whom she had hoped would rescue her, has been taken prisoner, fear and frustration infuse her words. It "drives [one] mad. . . to know / that on one certain day, at a certain hour, / If one had chosen well," she and her husband could have lived and reigned successfully. As soon as Fleming says, "They'll not hold him [Bothwell] long," Mary counters with, "they'll not jail us two apart " and "it's something to love / even late " (131, *italics mine*). Her words here reflect then circle back to earlier images and reaffirm her resolve. Even when she says "late" in reference to their married love, she does so in the positive context of gratitude. In this first section of Act Three, then, we see a woman in transition whose language reflects a deepened awareness about what actions she may have to take.

After a brief exchange with the Scottish lords who seek her abdication,

during which Mary refuses to give up the throne, Elizabeth herself enters to pressure Mary further. In describing this extraordinary exchange, critic R. D. Skinner calls this "human, woman to woman struggle" a "duel of rhetoric and prophecy" (189). We have seen how Elizabeth imposes her duplicitous mode of being onto this confrontation, revealing herself finally as a facade, a queen who sacrificed private identity and personal happiness in service to an obsession to rule well. But when we examine this scene from Mary's perspective, we witness a painstaking evolution toward integration, completeness, and authenticity in both inner and outer experience.

The experience of talking herself through feelings of disconnection from her husband and from normal space/time have prepared her for this present trial on Elizabeth's home ground. Taking the initiative by exerting the full force of her manipulative personality, Elizabeth wants Mary to sign an abdication. To that end, she flatters her, speaking as a sister monarch, but soon she reveals her own faith in Machiavellian principles. Mary's tone hardens a bit, as she questions the circumstances of her confinement. Finding that Elizabeth holds her, she begs to be set free from the present "agony" of self-doubt that causes her to feel a "death tinge" over her life. During the course of this desperate plea, Mary uses temporal ("I have been here a long while") and spatial ("If it's your policy . . . to shut me up") language to convey despair. Faced with the spectre of perpetual isolation, she feels now as she felt when Bothwell left. In that instance the pain of separation impelled her to search out and use language that would not only express the grief, but help her to endure and then reorient herself through action.

Mary soon unravels the long skein of deception that Elizabeth had woven around her, recognizing that Elizabeth has caused Rizzio's murder, the scandal of lies about her, and, of course, the separation from Bothwell. Beginning with Elizabeth's next words--"I can wait"--a strain of language patterning perspectives of time threads through to the end of the play. The term "wait," derived from the verb "to watch," suggests an expectant inaction, an anticipation of something happening (Webster's Third New International Dictionary). When Mary quickly counters with "And I can wait. I can better wait than you" (148), we remember the beginning of this act, with her sitting and watching hopefully at the prison window. Since Elizabeth herself has not been capable of patiently waiting for circumstances to change, instead of strenuously manipulating them, we know Mary can outwait her. But for what shall she wait? Looking first to her husband and then to sympathetic neighboring nations to rescue her, she says, "each week that passes/I'll be stronger" (148). Ever prepared for contingencies, however, Elizabeth first reminds Mary that she controls where the Scottish queen waits. And, secondly, she tells Mary that "each year" she will remove her prisoner literally from sight and figuratively from memory, thereby ensuring that Mary will be forgotten during her lifetime.

Feeling frustrated in the face of Elizabeth's argument, Mary resorts to a frame of temporal reference removed even from their own lifetimes: she says that she will "wait longer than a life" to be exonerated by history. "I'll win men's hearts in the end," she says, "Though the sifting takes / This hundred years--or a thousand" (150). She then expresses the desire to synthesize both her inherited public identity and her hard-won personal one by saying, "When all's done, it's my name I care for, my name and

heart / To keep them clean" (150). By yoking her name (as queen) and her heart (as lover) together, Mary recognizes an integral self, one that has evolved toward wholeness. And by "clean" she of course refers to the honesty with which she infuses belief into experience. This authenticity has meant so much that she is now willing to sacrifice her freedom and her life for it, as she speaks of being vindicated at a later time.

Once more, however, Elizabeth frustrates Mary's cause, delivering what she believes to be the finishing stroke. Because she has cared so much for her own queenly identity, she has made provisions for this historical possibility by forging letters so that future generations might "believe the worst" of Mary and the best of her. To this point in this scene, Mary has had to, by turns, relinquish hope of either being saved by others or being vindicated by the truth. What was once a "distant struggle" between the two, says Tees, has now become an intimate test of wills (56).

At this juncture Mary begins speaking with the confidence that comes from awareness of strength, successfully uniting almost all strains of language that have marked the course of her journey. Passion infuses her words, "and still I win" (151), with emphasis on the "still" to affirm her will to overcome circumstance. Mary will now play her trump card in this game of political brinksmanship: she will confront her enemy with the truth of her own experience. She says Elizabeth "has no children. . . will have none, can have none," calling attention to the experience of living out the woman/wife/mother roles that Elizabeth has denied herself. Recalling the language of duplicity that marked Elizabeth's manipulative actions, Mary now says, "This crooked / track / You've drawn me on, cover it. . . cover it deep / And heap my infamy over it, lest men peer / And catch sight of you as you were and are" (151). By tying together language elements

used by Elizabeth herself, Mary shows that she now understands her adversary. No longer the idealist who totally believes in the inherent goodness of men, this wiser woman now acknowledges the duplicity with which she now struggles.

Fortified by this recognition and acceptance of reality, Mary can now say that, though left to languish "year by year," she still wins. She foresees the complete obliteration of the material self in prison--her name like the dust of her body will be forgotten, "inscribed on the four winds"--something she had so bitterly lamented in similar language when faced with losing Bothwell. But because she had accepted and survived that particular loss, she gained a dimension to her self that fortifies her now. Mary has acquired insight and power by choosing to risk loving, enough power to confront Elizabeth now with the full force of her emergent self. Wall says Anderson dramatizes how power destroys (364); Rabkin cites the thematic contradiction between authority and freedom inherent in this scene (275); and Clark points to the collision between selfish and unselfish ideals of governing inherent in the two characters (1086).

Despite her impotence in face of Elizabeth's power, Mary will make her public mark by living out a private identity: "I have been/a woman, and I have loved as a woman," she says exultantly, "lost as a woman loses" (151-152). In these lines, Mary's authenticity confronts Elizabeth's barrenness. She goes on to say, "I have borne a son / and he will rule Scotland--and England. You have no / heir" (152). When Elizabeth angrily asks one last time if she will abdicate, Mary answers, "My pride is stronger than yours, and my heart beats / blood / such as yours has never known" (152). Anderson shows us the habit of mind that first generated blood imagery returning; however, Mary's present experience surpasses the first instance

that signified pride in the Stuart legacy and the second that accompanied the violence resulting from her disastrous decision to preserve queenship. Now when she says the word "blood," in the full light of the self-knowledge she has acquired, she refers to the commingled identities of woman and queen. Stuart blood continues to course through her veins, yet experience has transformed language to the extent that blood symbolizes passionate love, which in turn infuses the monarchy with meaning. "And in this dungeon / I win here, alone" (152). These are Mary's parting words to Elizabeth. Like all imagistic language she has used in this act, the spatial referents "dungeon. . .alone" identify her as having come to terms with the consequences of her actions.

At one time Mary the queen could not allow herself to consider forming a bond between her and an unsuitable mate; then Mary as lover could not consent easily to breaking those same bonds; now, however, Mary as product of both those experiences can endure solely and understand wholly the fate that she has herself chosen. The hand at first reveals a naive queen but modulates into the touch of a passionate woman and later the purposeful awareness that dust means physical dissolution in time. Blood begins as pride in family heritage but becomes powerfully graphic lifeblood before finally joining a passionate woman to her lover. Finally, time and space undergo a change in Mary's language, from indexes of circumscribed existence to be lamented to evidence of human limitation to be accepted.

Critical discourse dealing with this conclusion point to Anderson's evenly matched characters whose clash of wills brings forward questions of power and its abuse. Concurring with conclusions arrived at in this chapter, Tees discusses how Mary triumphs over Elizabeth as a ruler and

as a woman (56); and Shivers says Mary proves she can play Elizabeth's form of power politics without losing her soul since she has proven herself morally superior (83). Conclusions drawn in this chapter dispute those of Childs, especially since he says the play illustrates how guile (Elizabeth) triumphs over faith (Mary) when "the shrewd inherit the earth" (483). However, commentators Halline and Rice would concur with views arrived at here, that Mary becomes ennobled because of her right vision (74) and that her ultimate victory shows that humans can become what they dream (368). As for language, Tees calls attention to the emotional intensity of the last scene, with its "lean and powerful" language (56); Clark says there is "rich color and rhythm" in the verse (1086); and Young points especially to Elizabeth's speeches as "superb, the best in the play" (131). But when Wall says that the intensity of verse imagery in this "unforgettable" last scene fires the audience's imagination, he successfully pinpoints Anderson's poetic technique and its effect: this chapter would add that imagery has affected the character as well as the audience.

For Mary language itself has been a form of action, a way of discovering how best to adjust herself in the world while maintaining inner integrity. When some of her earlier actions prove disastrous to her, she suffers and becomes willing to modify those beliefs. We hear her modify her language, as key images impel her action of re-seeing her past and future as she successfully integrates both aspects of her identity--lover and queen. She then moves inward, where she questions her beliefs while recognizing the limitations of living a partial existence predicated, like Elizabeth's, on ruling well. Armed with this self knowledge, Mary can then begin to move outward to achieve an authenticity that includes both external accomplishment and internal development.

Notes

¹ Produced by the Theatre Guild in 1935 and starring Helen Hayes in the title role, Mary of Scotland ran for 248 performances and was the center of a storm of controversy when it was later nominated for the Pulitzer Prize; largely because this well-received play was passed over for the award, the Drama Critics' Circle came into being, with its first award going, in 1936, to Anderson's Winterset.

² Maxwell Anderson, Eleven Verse Plays (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1939) 150. All subsequent quotations are from this edition and will be cited parenthetically within the text.

Chapter 3

SYNGE AND RENUNCIATION OF THE SELF

Like Maxwell Anderson, John Synge explores the relationship between the individual and the social selves through the use of imagistic elements in language, in order that a character might better discover choices for the self. Unlike Anderson however, Synge did not use verse forms; instead, he makes use of cultural folkways, especially Irish peasant language, to develop a prose style that serves as poetry, largely because of its strongly imagistic content and rhythmic cadences. Synge focuses on the interaction between the individual and his environment by showing how an outsider enters into a community and is changed by the mediating influence of language as it both illuminates his essential nature and encourages him to become a cultural hero. This chapter, then, examines Synge's development of the relationship between poetic imagery in language and choices for action that lead either toward or away from authentic self-realization.

John Millington Synge (1871-1909) was an upper class Anglo-Irishman with an extraordinary empathy and respect for the largely Catholic Irish peasant. His reputation today as a playwright rests upon a collection of plays about Irish country folk that illuminates peasant ways while exploring more modern themes like individual isolation and authentic identity. Riders to the Sea (1903), his one act tragedy of mythic proportions, examines a mother's grief over her son's drowning. In the farcical In the Shadow of the Glen (1903) a woman rebels against a loveless marriage by

choosing a life of wandering as consolation when dreams go unfulfilled. Another woman, this one with pagan values, collides with civilization's restrictivness in The Tinker's Wedding (1908). Two blind beggars have their ideal imaginings spoiled by an ugly and brutal reality in The Well of the Saints (1906) when physical sight does not bring spiritual contentment. Synge's greatest dramatic accomplishment, The Playboy of the Western World (1907), is a play that caused much controversy when first produced, largely because of Synge's handling of not only the Irishman's poetry, vigor and imagination, but his weakness, hypocrisy and greed (Skelton, 65). To the parochial minded Irish theatregoer at the turn of the century, this latter depiction could not be tolerated. But today Playboy is highly regarded, both by audiences who find it continually produced all over the world and by academics like Bruce Bigley who say the play "has worn well, it is worth study and rereading, and it has as unanimous a critical acclaim as one is likely to find in a twentieth-century author" (157).

In all his drama, but especially in Playboy, Synge directs attention to the significance of the imagination and language. He writes in his Preface to Playboy that when "the imagination of the people, and the language they use, is rich and living, it is possible for a writer to be rich and copious in his words, and at the same time to give the reality, which is the root of all poetry" (Preface 53). By travelling extensively through Ireland and living with its people, Synge learned that as an artist he might depend upon an unchanging rural culture to provide in a fast-changing world the patterns for poetic expression that are at once rich and real. The fanciful manifest in elemental physical reality--this is what he saw in his travels, particularly in the far western Aran Islands. There he found a primitive people who, says Jack Yeats, "fitted in with his humour" more than any

others he met on his far flung journeys, because "the wild things they did and said were a joy to him"(42). Whereas Synge found a great deal of squalor in rural poverty and spiritual aridity where the rich lived, W. B. Yeats observes that he found his "genius and his peace" in the Arans where people live artist fashion "in the presence of death and childhood," and where "life outleaps its limits" as they escape the trivial to find dignity (18).

When Synge says of these Irish that their lives yield up so much richness and reality, he speaks to the motives for action and expressive language found in Playboy. Synge himself would have observed that his plays gained a good deal from his five visits to the Islands. While there he wrote diary-like articles that capture the untamed spirit as well as the vibrant dialect of the islanders that would later influence his own artistic sensibility. W. B. Yeats says that in the Arans Synge listened to the "beautiful English which has grown up in Irish-speaking districts, and takes its vocabulary from the time of Malory and of the translation of the Bible, but its idiom and its vivid metaphor from Irish" (Preface, 64). Besides using the imagery and rhythm of these rural story tellers, Synge also discovered in incidents retold to him the plots of some of his plays, the one for Playboy most notably. And in their stoic, almost pagan attitude toward death and violence which were always as close at hand as the perilous Irish sea, Synge found the thematic chords he would strike in his drama where the isolated individual often faces a hostile universe.

Many conclusions have been drawn about Playboy by earlier critics who have seen the play as everything from a burlesque of the Irish temperament to a satire of western culture, with stops in between for a tragi-comedy about the growth of a mythic hero, an archetypal story of patricide and a play

about symbolic violence from folk legend.¹ Generally these earlier critics disagree about whether to classify the play as either realistic or fantastic, since contrasts occur so rapidly here (Spacks 79; Howe 80).

More recent commentators, like Nicholas Grene, have acknowledged the complexity in the play, cautioning against abstracting a theme to stand for what the play is about while asserting that Synge deliberately chooses different modes of action to symbolize equally unstable patterns of behavior he saw in the Irish character (88). What mode the action takes does appear problematic in that comic and tragic elements seem to flow almost indiscriminately together. Edward Hirsch says the play "insistently creates a way of responding to it which it then contradicts" (116). Any effort to pin it down by bringing forward one element like, for instance, the grotesque at the expense of other more naturalistic elements will result in both suffering. The best course would be to see, as Grene does, a positive relational effect between two disparate elements, similar to an electric current (135, 145). Rather than be provoked by the ambiguity in tone and genre found in this richly complex play, says Weldon Thornton, we can enjoy it (138).

While acknowledging the complexity of the play, this chapter will examine the relationship between poetic imagery and choices for action that lead either toward or away from authentic self-realization. In her "reassessment" of Playboy, Mary C. King also examines the relationship between word and action, specifically by referencing the concept that language can mediate between subject and object in a modern "metadrama" where individual and collective identities collide (140-57). Although King approaches Synge's work differently, by tracing his interest in the historical evolution of language, she does conclude, as does this

study, that Synge stands at an historically pivotal place between earlier nineteenth century writers and moderns like Brecht and Beckett (202). Corroborating what this Introduction established about Synge's early modern belief in the efficacy of language, King goes on to say he took refuge in a poetic aesthetic and in games/role-playing to establish identity for his characters (10). But while King examines Playboy and Christy Mahon's growth toward identity in terms of how language relates to self-referential play, this present chapter diverges from her study by developing in detail the interaction between the collectively focused nature of town language and individual poetic expression in the characters of Pegeen Mike and Christy Mahon.

Part I of this chapter looks at Synge's use of language to mimic the false self for Christy, one conferred on him by the culture. Part II discusses that peasant culture collectively, as it actively creates the hero it thinks it needs. Part III examines Synge's character Pegeen Mike, a town girl who learns to use language to act out a romantic self. Part IV deals with Synge's "hero," Christy Mahon, an outsider whose essential self briefly authenticates the image of playboy.

Part I: False Poetry and the Hero

Through his use of a language pattern that we can call "false poetry," Synge presents Christy Mahon as a young man in transition, one who wants to act harmoniously with his essential self, but one who also periodically succumbs to what others would have him be. In this pattern

Synge clearly tracks the frequently shifting paths Christy takes toward a more stable identity. During these periods of surrender to the prompting of others, this character uses false poetry, imagistic language that falsifies inner experience in order to manipulate others. In several speeches that come late in the play, Christy's profuse and acutely violent imagery, combined with his demonstrated willingness to act with similar ferocity, suggests that he has embraced the attributed, essentially false image of cultural hero conferred on him by these people. At the end of the play, when the time seems ripe for him to decide whether to act in congruence with inner experience or not, we have a means for interpreting his choice.

Christy Mahon lies on the Flaherty shebeen floor, near the end of Act III, his legs wrapped around a table and his arms tightly bound with rope. He has just found that his lover Pegeen Flaherty not only renounces his affections, but threatens to burn his leg with a firecoal if he does not surrender to the authorities for the presumed murder of his father. His voice "rising and growing stronger," Christy erupts into several intensely emotional speeches that identify a final turn in a somewhat erratic course toward a consistent identity. "If I've to face the gallows," he says to the townspeople of Mayo,

I'll have a gay march down. . .and shed the blood of some of you
before I die. . . . If I do lay my hands on you, it's the way you'll
be at the fall of night hanging as a scarecrow for the fowls of
hell. . . . If I can wring a neck among you, I'll have a royal
judgement looking on the trembling jury in the courts of law.²

By using such specifically violent referents, Synge connects Christy to a verbal pattern we have heard from him before, especially during times when he was unsure of himself. In order to enable Christy to identify with

an attributed self, Synge has him mimic his cruel father until he could, by degrees, gain enough proficiency to speak as if he had become what they said he was.

This young man who has become unmoored from the only identity that he has known, that of being bound in servitude to a tyrannical father, speaks about his father's violent behavior, when he spends his first few minutes alone with Pegeen in Act I. As a means of patterning himself after the closest approximation of the violent "hero" that he believes the townspeople demand, he talks of his father, Old Mahon, saying he was "a man never gave peace to any saving when he'd get two months or three. . . for battering peelers or assaulting men" (85). Slipping into this false mode, he says, "it was a bitter life he led me till I did up a Tuesday and halve his skull" (85). By having him say, "halve his skull" to describe the supposed method of murder and then calling himself "a seemly fellow with great strength in me and bravery" (85), Synge exaggerates in order that Christy might win over a most willing-to-be-impressed Pegeen. At this moment when his words are meant to image a fierce poet, there comes a knock at the door that splinters that image: this formidable fugitive clings to Pegeen, fearful that he will be caught.

What this brief instance of Christy's using false poetry does is establish his capability to use language manipulatively. But his fragile identity state prohibits him from acting consistently with the false image. Christy comically falls short of the mark, for the time being reduced to the more familiar role of victim. His insecurity will often provide fertile ground for comically rapid reversals in speech and action like this one. By turns he is a cowardly, cringing victim and the larger-than-life, swaggering teller of fantastic tales. Alan Price speaks of these "peaks" and "troughs" in the

action as an erratic development from weakling to hero and back again, until Christy's triumphs secure the hero image for him (178).

Synge later puts Christy in a similar position of wanting to sound like the hero to the young women of Mayo when the boy describes to them the events leading up to the murder of his father. In an effort to stretch himself out of his interior shape, the son emulates the father's example of using language to intimidate. "I hit a blow on the ridge of his skull," Christy says, "laid him stretched out, and he split to the knob of his gullet" (103). When he reaches this far out of himself to become the murderer/hero that these women want, using false words to mirror a false self, he again leaves himself open to the reversal that occurs when he plays at being what he is not. Sure enough, Pegeen comes in and his acting of the part ends because he fears her wrath.

Through his use of language in these scenes, Synge progressively magnifies and comically distorts Christy's view of the hero to show that the character cannot respond to this image from anywhere within himself to lend it credence. On still another occasion--this time for the benefit of the Widow Quin and Shawn Keogh--Christy responds to the promptings of others by saying what he thinks they want to hear. Dressed to the teeth in Shawn's new clothes he swaggers about, calling himself a "gallant orphan cleft his father with one blow to the breeches belt" (119). Christy's imagination, stimulated so much now by their coaxing, has magnified the blow so that the old man becomes severed in two. Trying once again to carry off a role that does not fit him anymore than Shawn's outsized clothing brings with it comically disastrous consequences: his "swagger" becomes a "stagger" when none other than an intact Old Mahon materializes at the shebeen. Brief though they are, these several instances

reflect his willingness to pretend he is something he is not in order to shore up his fragile, transient sense of self. Little but braggadocio, his words bring him closer to a self defined by this false poetry--the fiery and fierce poet who uses language for self-serving purposes.

With his father's coming, however, his self-perception, as well as his language, changes. His father's survival throws him into such an intense state of uncertainty, threatening the just-budding intimacy with Pegeen and the heady admiration from the women of Mayo, that he feels jeopardized by the old man's menacing presence. "May I meet him with one tooth and it aching," he says, "and one eye to be seeing seventy devils in the twists of the road, and one old timber leg on him to limp into the scalding grave" (125). This curse underscores not so much his rage as his impotence since language here actually substitutes for action.

But more is at stake than his physical well-being when later Pegeen's father and erstwhile fiance Shawn oppose Christy's marriage to Pegeen. Christy warns Shawn, "Take yourself from this, young fellow, or I'll maybe add a murder to my deeds to-day" (155). False poetry to forge experience gives way now to plain-spokenness that clearly expresses intent. Shawn momentarily resists, whereupon Christy picks up a shovel and tells him to "quit off" from his pursuit of Pegeen. Two currents of sensibility collide in Christy now. On the one hand these few, firm words demonstrate his willingness to defend an authentically imaged self, the one we will see him bringing to reality in his relationship with Pegeen. On the other hand, however, he now sees that he must be willing to use whatever means available, even violence if necessary, to defend the viability of that authentic self within the context of a hostile society. What this means is that he now

risks becoming through his words and deeds the false self he has been projecting in order to protect the existence of a true identity.

When Christy had previously exaggerated his deeds, acting as if he were the hero, seriocomic reversals befell him on each occasion. This time, however, the reversal proves disastrous because while the earlier threats were innocuous, this one proves real: Old Mahon returns again, and, in full view of the town, exposes his son. Because he has not yet acted forcefully enough to vitalize his public image, he momentarily loses his belief that he could become what they said he was. Feeling backed into a corner by this attack against his fragile identity, he soon strikes back. With the townspeople as witness, he says, "keep off. . .lest I do show a blow unto the the lot of you would set the guardian angels winking in the clouds above" (165). The loss of a love relationship, coupled with the threat of reliving the victim's role, now combine to motivate this threatening language. A blow so strong that the heavens reverberate, he hopes, will preserve enough of the "mighty man" image so that he will not have to act in a way that betrays the essential self he has experienced with Pegeen. For, to Christy's mind, he has proven himself a hero, becoming the man they wanted, one whose words and deeds validate artistry and courage: "I'm after hearing my voice this day," he says, "saying words would raise the topknot on a poet. . . .I've won your racing and your lepping" (165). He gets no response from the townspeople. "Shut your gullet and come with me" is the answer he gets, instead, from Old Mahon.

For Christy, language no longer suffices. Hearing this tyrannical echo from his past, he yields to the power of disappointment and passion by committing the deed a second time: he goes after Old Mahon with a loy, "killing" him yet again. Forced by circumstance to do the deed, he can

neither threaten nor falsify; instead, he does the deed first to defend his own dignity, since he can no longer play victim, and second to regain Pegeen's respect.

But, because Pegeen and the townspeople fear the authorities, they not only do not reconfirm his status, they want to turn him over to the police. Nowhere has Christy's language held as much potency as in the "gallows" speech cited earlier; easily overriding his weakened physical position, his words empower his identity despite his physical shackles. Using language with limited success to falsify experience, he eventually begins acting in accordance with changing experience. Where false words formerly mirrored a false self, Christy's language now convinces the reality that the "false" poet could be a viable identity choice for him.

The problem occurs, however, when he chooses this incomplete identity, ignoring the reality of the essential self that we will later see flourish within the love relationship with Pegeen. Even though the context for this love disappears with Pegeen's repudiation, Christy does not realize that this more harmonious, self-created fusion of inner qualities, language and action can exist apart from the woman who helped create it. Present circumstances constrain him so that by the time he utters these words to indicate his choice, he has learned to defend himself from manipulating people who want him either to measure up to their expectations or acquiesce to their demands. A more clearly focused, but less authentic, sense of self breaks away with him when he escapes their bonds and leaves Mayo a supposedly free man.

Part II: The Language of Liminality

Synge presents, in the characters of the Mayo villagers, people unable to live out their imaginations as Christy sometimes does, since they have become defined and circumscribed by their stultifying existences. If "false" poetry periodically characterizes Christy's language as he counterfeits experience to gain the approval of people in Mayo, they themselves substitute language for action, because they fear the consequences of action. We learn immediately that it is Fair time. For these people who are isolated from a larger "outside" world, the Fair means that normal constraints that govern behavior will be loosened as they become involved in a mixture of commerce and carnival that frees them from everyday cares associated with the rural peasant farmer's life. For at this special time that we may term liminal, the people of Mayo, individuals all, coalesce into a communal identity, one that proves so powerful as to persuade Christy that he can become their hero. When Christy arrives they soon see him as a man from the outside with potential not only to add to the excitement of the games, but to meet their more deep-seated need to transcend the experience of this place. By examining the attitudes that form the collective identity of these people, especially as such attitudes can be found in their language, we come to understand how and why they affect Christy so profoundly. As these people--Pegeen, Shawn, Michael and his friends--relate to one another through language in the scenes before Christie arrives, some of the dominant attitudes that emerge include a sense of isolation and loneliness, a fear of authority, a lack of emotional attachment and a condoning of brutish behavior. All these combine to form a collective point of view and a language of liminality.

As the first scene of the play opens Flaherty's shebeen, where all the action takes place, materializes as a "rough and untidy" country ale house, a shebeen with an open turf fire place around which the members of this peasant culture gather to talk.³ In this public house we first hear Pegeen Mike and Shawn Keogh in conversation; they are later joined by her father and several of his friends. The wider setting, we are told, is the "wild coast of Mayo" and the time "a dark evening of autumn," probably around the turn of the century.

Synge suggests that an atmosphere of liminality pervades this place and these people at this time. The combination of having everyday restraints on behavior loosened and of being on the margin of civilization, isolated between land and sea, makes for a high emotional valence in these people poised on the brink. Living in what amounts to a state of imminence, these peoples' collective imagination can potentially propel them across a threshold of change at any moment. At the same time, however, as we experience a climate charged with expectation, we sense its inherent instability. Fairtime will end, and life in Mayo will return to normal. And even while these people grant power to a poet/hero, by the same token they retain the power to withdraw it. The hero's essentially fragile position, serving at the pleasure of these who helped create him, can prove treacherous ground on which to walk.

Living as they do on the desolate, westernmost reaches of Ireland, these characters share imaginatively the isolated feeling associated with the landscape. Within only about ten minutes time, before Christy enters, they talk about the darkness of the night and the lonesomeness of the place at least twelve times. These two concepts--the image associated with "darkness" and the feeling with "lonesome"--twin themselves within their

minds, becoming indivisible because of the marginal conditions in which they exist. Coming in out of the "dark night" to visit Pegeen, Shawn speaks of the outside stillness where there is "not a step moving any place" (57) and later Michael talks about Mayo as "the lonesome west" (65). Loneliness as a thematic concept has drawn much critical attention, with Howard D. Pearce, for example, seeing the choice here between love and freedom (310), while Augustine Martin considers Christy as being poised between loneliness and companionship as a Apollonian/Dionysian struggle ensues (68).

Several incidents point to more familiar sources of fear, sources within, not without, this authoritarian society. Of course, all the talk about "darkness" and "lonesomeness" strongly hints at the underlying fearfulness in these people. Early on, Pegeen speaks to Shawn about taking her "death with the fear" of what lurks outside the light and warmth of the shebeen (61). Pegeen fears that she and Shawn will be held responsible by the police if a dead man is found outside the shebeen. At the end of the play fear of these "peelers" becomes a deciding factor when they must determine what to do with the double murderer, Christy. When Pegeen's father and his friends come in, another form of authority strikes fear in Shawn: this time it is fear of Father Reilly. Even though he does not appear, Father Reilly's mere name, and the threat of his moral sanction, strikes fear in him. Joining the policeman and the priest as paternal figures who have the power to intimidate is the father, represented here by Michael Flaherty. As the Irish peelers enforce harsh English law and the parish priest promotes the ends of the Catholic Church, so the usually hard-drinking and despotic father rules his household. Michael does inspire fear in Shawn and something akin to contempt in Pegeen. Later another father,

Old Mahon, also engenders fear and resentment in his offspring, proving further that fathers in this society relate autocratically, not lovingly. Critic Harry Smith points to outmoded marriage customs, denial of self-expression and suppression of family feeling as reasons for the oppressive father figure in Irish society (382).

Contributing to the lonely, fearful nature of the place is this sense of there being little or no connectedness between these characters. Love itself does not underlie the relational bonds between the people of Mayo. Within this society where the father rules the home, the priest dictates from the church and the police control the area in between, there seems small chance for expression of love in an atmosphere of fear and oppression. What connections exist seem to be based on simple pragmatism. The relationship between Pegeen and Shawn is one case in point. Even though this young man and woman are ostensibly engaged as the play opens, Pegeen continues what she was doing without paying attention to Shawn when he enters. Displaying little romance, they exchange information and not affection. Of course, at this time in Irish history, loveless, arranged marriages primarily benefitted the families involved: romantic love, a luxury of those with no land, many times did not figure in a culture where these few men who had not emigrated had to wait to middle age for their fathers to die in order to inherit their patrimony.⁴ This type of arranged match applies here, since Pegeen's father seems pleased at having provided his daughter with a "decent man," and one who has property to bring into the marriage.

The relationship between Michael and Pegeen is no more intimate than that of the engaged couple. During a sharp interchange between father and daughter, Pegeen berates him as being a poor father for leaving her alone.

He shrugs her off saying she is not a loyal daughter for asking him to forego his pleasure. Each seeks to manipulate the other, expressing resentment and displeasure within the framework of familial roles because, although these ties may be loveless, they do provide a measure of security. When neither achieves satisfaction from the other, Michael turns his attention to Shawn and, with the other men, uses verbal byplay to perturb him, pushing him literally and figuratively until he runs out the door. First, they sense his weakness, but they also seem intent upon creating a fierce undercurrent beneath their innocuous verbal thrust and parry, indulging in and tolerating a type of acceptable cruelty.

Some instances here in this first scene suggest that these people for whom violence is the norm incline toward cruelty. Insensitivity involving harsh treatment creates a mood of emotional turbulence in which characters are ranked in a hierarchy of power: from the strongest to the weakest, they act cruelly, tolerate it, or fear it. In the short time before Michael enters, Pegeen and Shawn talk about the goings on of those both foreign and local. Potential danger comes from the drunken harvest boys, the itinerant tinkers, and the idle militia who roam the countryside (63). But danger may also come from within the confines of this town, where men commit "dirty deeds" with impunity, acts like "knocking the eye from a peeler" and "maiming ewes" (59). Even among these supposed friends there exists an undercurrent of animosity, a spirit of callousness toward one another. Distance and time validate violence for these villagers, whose proximity to natural processes of the earth have helped inure them to commonplace cruelty and have propelled them toward creating an archetypal hero who fits the violent pattern. Many commentators have discussed Synge's treatment of violence, saying that the underlying cruelty

in the place manifests itself in the townspeople's fascination with brutality, especially in deeds done far away from Mayo and in the past; another observation about violence centers around their inability to free themselves from stultifying social conventions that degrade them within a narrow, materialistic world where longings go unfulfilled (Grene 143-44; Kilberd 113; Salmon 120; Sanderlin 297; Smith 385-86).

How they speak to one another, especially, reflects a benumbed state: in their language as well as their actions, they demonstrate a lack of sensitivity. For example, Pegeen and Shawn begin their scene by exchanging information about her father's whereabouts, later discussing the town lunatics; but in between they have an opportunity to communicate on a more intimate level. Pegeen initiates a shift in tone when she speaks of "the dark night gone by," and Shawn seems to pick up on her mood when he says, "I could hear the cows breathing, and sighing in the stillness of the air" (57). Pegeen then asks why she should be left alone "counting the hours to the dawn of day," to which Shawn replies that, after they are married, he will not leave her to go off in the dark night. This is an attempt at a "love" scene without their expressing themselves on anything more than a superficial, prosaic level. Although they have spoken with one another they have not engaged each other with words, in the subtext of powerful feeling that we will later see in Christy and Pegeen.

Yet Synge has us realize that words are important to these Irish characters living in marginal circumstances. They come from the lonely darkness into this gathering place where they talk to one another, apparently aware of the rhetorical potential that underlies their speech. Pegeen cites one Marcus Quin, an apparently infamous local character, as an example of a man who had "a great warrant to tell stories of Holy

Ireland till he'd have the old women shedding down tears about their feet" (59). Shawn replies that the priest would frown on that sort "walking around and talking to the girls." Although a petty criminal who "maimed ewes," Marcus Quin fulfills a need in these people, especially the women. One possible function of language, they seem to say, is to transform mundane experience.

Ready to have "the poet" bridge the gap between where they are and where they want to be, all these characters, but the women especially, crave the release that language gives them from boredom and care. By telling his story, the poet/hero can actually banish fear in the listener, since words have power to influence and change the nature of feeling. He can also bring the larger world to them, thereby causing them to feel less isolated and even more connected to one another because of the communal experience of being an audience. And he can, through the retelling of his deed, transform the brutality they know into courage, as he confronts authority in a way they wish they could. Potentially, the man on whom they confer the title "poet" has the power to be a catalyst for a great deal of change. Commenting that these women need a hero to "shape him to fit a vacuum in their day to day existence," Harry Smith says the hero fills an important sociological function (383). Laboring under societal pressures that coerce them either to engage in bizarre, marginally criminal acts or to seek safety by doing nothing, the men here also desire to have experience transformed so that they can live a vicarious life while maintaining a safe distance.

Into liminal Mayo comes Christy Mahon. During the first scene between him and the townspeople, from the time he enters until the men leave (67-77), the reality of who Christy is matters little. He has arrived among a group whose capacity to be affected and to effect change, causes them to

image Christy as the poet/hero they need. In comes this "frightened and dirty," smallish young man who, in the short space of a half hour's time, becomes a "wonder" because of their imaginative volatility during Fairtime. They initially relate to him fearfully, as a stranger from the treacherous world "out there," especially when he asks about the police coming round. Mentioning this symbol of a threatening authority automatically puts them on the defensive. A game of cat-and-mouse ensues during which, as they question him about his "crime," he gives them just enough information to pique their curiosity. Fear, then, turns to curiosity and curiosity to admiration as the deed slowly comes to light.

In this important first scene between the villagers and Christy, Synge demonstrates that the townspeople use language imaginatively, but for the purpose of creating an image for another so that they might live through him. Norman Podheretz affirms these imaginative capabilities when he says these people live "almost entirely in an imaginative world of their own creation" (69). At first asking about rather ordinary sorts of crimes, Michael, Pegeen and the boys soon learn that this anonymous fugitive from a formerly wealthy family has done "something big," perhaps an act against the same oppressive system that impedes their lives. Did he kill bailiffs, agents or landlords, they ask? He says no. Impressed by and drawn to this "puzzle-the-world," they think of more imaginative misdeeds for him to have done, like counterfeiting English money, committing bigamy or perpetrating treason against the British in the Boer War. They take no notice of the "shy" way he says no to each; instead, his answer further fuels their collective imagination.

Emphasizing their shared need now to know what he has done, Pegeen uses the conventional method of relating within a context of cruelty,

berating him by saying he is so soft he "wouldn't slit the windpipe of a screeching sow" (71). When Christy protests she threatens him with "the butt of a broom," another reflection of the harshness inherent in the place. Taking no notice of Christy's cringing away from her, they only hear what he now says: he has killed his father for threatening him in this same way.

They seize upon the audacious act in order to imagine an equally awesome inner nature for him. As if Christy had performed magic, fear and curiosity disappear, replaced by admiration and awe. One of the first things said--"you should have had a good reason for doing the like of that" (73)--provides a clue to their rather curious response to his revelation. The enormity of the deed, his rising up and destroying the sole source of security as well as tyranny for most of Ireland's sons, captures their fancy as no other deed could. How else, they reason, could a man commit such an act if not driven by tumultuous forces from within? They now close ranks to demand the full "story." Their veneration of language and need for someone to provide vicariously exciting experience surfaces now.

Even though Christy gives few concrete details, they continue to create an imagined hero, with little attention paid to the boy standing before them. Philly says Christy was not caught because he is an uncommon man, a "great terror when his temper's roused" (75). The others follow close on, reinforcing each other in uniformly effective expression. Now they intend not only to convince themselves and one another that this man has transcended common experience, but also to persuade Christy in evocative language to stay with them for a time, in order to meet their collective needs. Philly says of Christy: "He's a close man and his right surely." And Pegen: "That'd be a lad with the sense of Solomon to have for a potboy." Philly again: "If you'd that lad in the house there isn't one of them [peelers]

would come smelling around." Then Jimmy: "Bravery's a treasure in a lonesome place, and a lad would kill his father, I'm thinking, would face a foxy divil with a pitchpike on the flags of hell." Pegeen finishes: "I wouldn't be fearing the loosed khaki cut-throats, or the walking dead" (75).

Originally fearing that Christy would harm them, they now think that he can protect them from harm, whether from sources known like the peelers or those unknown like the marauding bands of petty criminals that wander the countryside. This "lonesome place," isolated from the larger world of grand passions, needs Christy's kind, a man obviously endowed with wisdom ("sense of Solomon") and courage ("bravery's a treasure").

So, even though Christy has supposedly committed patricide, at first thought a crime as heinous as to strike awe in them, they quickly create an imagined hero whose "gallous" qualities of character fit him to meet their needs. Actually, Christy had acted upon an impulse that, while it awes them, had probably occurred in many of them before: to rise up and take action against one who persecutes you, even if he is your father, seems at once unthinkable and desirable to one who wishes to remove him/herself from the role of victim. In a sense, then, Christy has acted for them, the victims too fear-ridden to take action for themselves. Patricide, says Eugene Benson, is for Christy a symbolic rejection of authority in order to assert liberty (126), but for the townspeople who are more corrupt and selfish, it motivates their deeds (121).

Christy Mahon's image expands in the next acts as the climate of liminality makes it possible for him not simply to remain the town's creation but to practice becoming a triple "playboy." In response to their collective encouragement he plays at being a poet, a romantic hero and a man of action, all facets of the playboy image. With the town girls and the

Widow Quinn as willing partners, Christy gives them the words they want as a mutual audience/performer connection develops that leaves them both satisfied. Later, others will convince him to alter his appearance in order to look the part of the romantic hero. And finally, Christy enlarges his reputation by becoming a man of action and athlete who demonstrates power and validates their faith in him. However, because of the unstable liminal conditions in Mayo, Christy's hero status ends before it has a chance to be lived out for any length of time.

With the coming of the Widow Quin at the end of this first act and the village girls in act two, Christy's image becomes successively amplified by their desire to have him become their bridge between everyday experience and imagined glory. "A man killed his father" aptly describes the young Christy who fast approaches becoming an emblem for heroism. His infamy will quickly spread throughout this small community, bringing its people, and especially its women, into the shebeen where they can see the phenomenon for themselves. During these scenes this desire empowers first their language then his as they seek to mold him into what they want him to be, taking little notice of who he is. At this point, during Fair time, they want to be entertained and inspired as an escape from monotonous existence in Mayo. But in a larger sense, they cast doubt on the grandiose deed done far away and on the essentially fragile process of hero-making.

When the Widow Quin comes into the shebeen for the purpose of finding out about the already ballyhooed "curiosity man," she comes face to face with, not so much the "roaring, romping" stranger who has captured imaginations, as a "little smiling fellow" more fit, she says, to be saying his catechism than to killing his father (87). At first amused by this incongruence, she soon seconds Pegeen's keen interest, as the latter says he

is "fit to be holding his head high with the wonders of the world" (87). Composed almost entirely of dialogue between the two women, with Christy's presence all but ignored, this scene is animated with the energy of women who would create a romantic hero where one hardly exists. Before long each seizes an arm, wishbone fashion, in an attempt to win Christy over. And when the Widow tries to persuade him, through effusive romantic imagery, to come live with her and be her love, Pegeen counters with a harshly realistic rebuttal, a sarcastic portrait of the Widow as a perversion of motherhood and a whore. For the Widow's part, she sees Pegeen's temper as potential trouble for Christy--"there's right torment will await you here," she says, "if you go romancing with her like" (91). As this scene ends and he prepares for sleep, Christy shows his astonishment at the changes that have already taken place.

By saying, "I'm thinking this night wasn't I a foolish fellow not to kill my father in the years gone by," he naively seeks to justify in his own mind why he no longer seems to be who he was when he walked into the shebeen earlier in the evening. On the sole basis of his act, people here are willing not only to put an end to his miserable fugitive's existence, but also to invest him with a celebrity's image.

The scene between Christy and the "stranger girls" in Act II encourages his becoming more like the image that people had begun to create the night before. Now he has the opportunity to tell more of his story and use language to appropriate the image for himself. As Christy enters "meek as a mouse," they overlook the obvious in favor of the fanciful. "The man killed his father" signifies Christy for these people; they will fill in the details of the hero image for themselves. While the Widow draws him out, encouraging him to tell about the events leading to the murder of his father,

Christy gains confidence in his abilities to speak in direct proportion to their coaxing. With "Glory be," "Did you kill him then?" and "You were right surely" they punctuate his narrative filled with Old Mahon's violent expressions that correspond to their image of Christy. In this town, where few ties bind with any strength, these women find release in a collectively romanticized image of him. As this scene ends the girls playfully link Christy's arm with the Widow's, offering a toast to these "heroes." By physically as well as mentally connecting these two, they acknowledge the similarly outlandish nature of each (Christy has just brandished a chicken bone to his throat in describing the murder). But at the same time as they are verifying his hero status, they cast doubt upon it by linking him to the local rogue who has done a "sneaky" murder herself.

"Girls are fond of courage," the Widow says to Shawn in the next act, describing the way Christy has affected the women of Mayo. While they speak Christy is trying on the new clothing they have brought him as an inducement to leave Mayo and to go, at their expense, to the exotic United States. Shawn's new coat, breeches and hat literalize the extravagantly chivalrous picture they paint for him of distant places. These trappings, as Christy sees them, will ensure his getting the one thing he wants now--Pegeen's affection. Commenting about this scene, C. L. Innes says that the clothes and the language are analagous, since Christy "tries on" both, with varying degrees of success (66). When he "sees" himself here in these natty clothes, he wants so strongly to live out the vision in a romantic relationship with Pegeen, but he can accomplish this only by acting out the false role that these borrowed clothes represent. He struts like a peacock in front of the metaphorical mirror they hold up for him, only to have the mirror crack in an instant, when Old Mahon walks in. Patterned as they have been on

those of his father, Christy's actions lead him to reflect a false self that he cannot hope to sustain.

As part of the Fair festivities, competitive games ensure that Christy will be given an even wider arena in which to play out his hero part. He singlehandedly wins in all areas of skill and luck, in games like roulette, "trick-o-the-loop" and cockshot and in sports like racing and "lepping." To the men of the town who hear about his success, Christy is the man of action who lives out the legend that they themselves cannot. As several of them stand by to witness his triumphing in a mule race across the seashore, they know they cannot compete with him on the level of either word or deed. But they do get what they originally wanted in Act I, someone to live out the "gallous" story for them.

As far as the town influence on Christy is concerned, it began on a high spirited note in Act II as the girls and the Widow conspired to coax him into telling his story so that he could become the incarnation of their imaginative experience. As they did this they took little notice of his actual personality. When time passed and his fame quickly spread, Shawn's plan to bribe him backfired, instead causing Christy to become briefly the out-sized hero image created for him. Christy's winning the games so handily will soon empower him to act upon internal urgings, creating with Pegeen's help a more authentic self in harmony with essential qualities like sensitivity and creativity. During these scenes of interaction with the townspeople, Christy has been in the process of reaching beyond their image of him, becoming his own creation. But before he gets to live out in any sense that authentic self, Christy must face some of the events precipitated by the return of his "dead" father, the grotesque Old Mahon.

In such liminal places as Mayo, there is the reverence for the grotesque and the fantastic "wonders" of the world, especially those whose remoteness intensifies their weird natures. From a distance, the grotesque galvanizes their curiosity, but when it appears up close in Mayo as the darker side of the hero, these people castigate it out of fear. First the girls want to see the man who killed his "da," and later, the men of Mayo focus on the misdeeds done on the "big world" of Dublin and Liverpool, where people keep skulls in jars on windowsills. But when Old Mahon appears as the embodiment of the grotesque, his head a "mass of bandages and plaster," his phantasmagorical appearance fascinates them. In a study on Synge and the grotesque, Toni O'Brien Johnson focuses on the realism that figures the bodily grotesque, a concept discussed by Mikhail Bakhtin in his study of Rabelais. According to Bakhtin folk culture produces an aesthetic, grotesque realism that resists any attempt to sever the material from the spiritual (18-19). Grotesque realism asserts the primacy of the body over the mind, as Bakhtin sees it, and a festive carnivalesque occasion provides a means for the gratification of the sensual as boundaries are lowered. O'Brien claims that the Widow Quin, with her lustful ways, best embodies the grotesque in the play (27). But Old Mahon equally typifies in his language a rootedness in physicality. His "stories of the naked truth" strengthen the grotesque image. "There was one time I seen ten scarlit divils letting on they'd cork my spirit in a gallon can," he says, "and one time I seen rats as big as badgers sucking the lifeblood from the butt of my lug" (143). This self-professed old "mad" man seems used to his inner demons, and his audience sees him as a bonafide grotesque.

"It's true mankind is the devil when your head's astray" (145): Old Mahon leaves with this comment about his own pathetic condition,

cheerfully accepting his lot in life as a supposed maniac. But these words might also apply to Christy's perilous state. "Mankind," here the townspeople, can be cruel since the potential for disastrous reversal lurks beneath this scene of festivity. Even as Christy is being carried on the shoulders of those who revere him as a hero, his father's appearance in Mayo will cut short this adulation because of the undercurrent of cruelty here. Those who venerate the fantastic at a distance have difficulty accepting it in their own backyard, even from one who has proven himself as Christy has.

In this liminal place, where people try to enliven dull lives through sensationalism, there soon comes a moment of transfiguration that seems to seal Christy's fate as hero and family member. Standing in between his daughter and Christy, Michael Flaherty delivers a philosophical speech that touches on several themes central to town attitudes. To overcome death and isolation, he says, men must create "families for the nurture of the earth" (157). Being a "decent man of Ireland" himself, he now chooses Christy's "little gallant swearers" for grandsons over the "puny weeds" he would get from Shawn. Present danger be damned, he seems to say, joining the couple's hands for the marriage blessing. He will break the cycle of fear, giving this "jewel of the world" to his daughter and joining himself to the courage and creativity he sees in the union.

But we have become accustomed to reversals that occur when expectations flood too highly in any one direction. And we know that Old Mahon lives. When the old man roars onto the scene, happy to resume his role as tyrant/father, the crowd of townfolk he brings with him acts as one, leaving the main players to carry the action. They passively watch events unfold, like chameleons reflecting both Pegeen's indignation and Old

Mahon's rage. When they finally witness a ferocious display of anger from father and son, they react with horror at real deeds done here, within their sight. The gap between illusion and reality closes abruptly as Christy picks up a loy. Once eager to hear about the murder, they now shrink away from the terrible reality of violence.

To the fearful crowd the choice comes down to protecting Christy or saving themselves from the consequences of a real murder. Fears for their safety run so deeply that their only choice can be to turn him over to the authorities. But the men shrink from the responsibility of capturing him, so they give it over to the most dauntless person among them, Pegeen Mike. "If we took pity on you," says Michael to Christy, "the Lord God would maybe bring us ruin from the law to-day" (169). In Act I they did take pity on him, when it seemed safe to do so; now that they could be held responsible for a murder in their midst, they look to Pegeen to assume the leadership.

Part III: Pegeen as a Public Self

Pegeen Flaherty takes the initiative in the above scene because of her most dominant trait, a strong will through which she acts aggressively to overpower others. Although a member of the community, Pegeen emerges as a particularly forceful character through whom the matrix of town attitudes is filtered. Like others, she craves release from boredom and isolation, wanting another to transform experience. In contrast, though, her vivid imagination and capriciousness set her apart. The public arena

provides her with a forum through which to live out an other-directed self, an identity predicated upon what others think of her. Pegeen is never as angry as when vulnerable to public opinion. In the first scenes with Christy she sees him as a medium through which she can strengthen her considerable pride. She "uses him," says Robin Skelton, "to search for identity, freedom and romance" (Writings, 128). Fearing the loss of her public image, Pegeen later resists being perceived as the foolish girl who makes a spectacle of herself when Christy makes sport with her. Finally able to move past anger and self-doubt, however, she hears and is moved by Christy's ardor.

Synge describes Pegeen Mike as a "wild-looking but fine girl of about twenty. . .dressed in the usual peasant dress" (57), a girl who would "knock the head of any two men in the place" (63). Calling attention to the complex nature of this character, one critic says she is a "virago, feared by all (Innes, 119), while another calls her "one of the most beautiful and living creatures in all drama"(Howe, 168). Later in the play, she will say to Christy, "I'm my whole life with my father only " (111), a fact that accounts for the way she sees herself. In her manner of dealing with others she imitates her insensitive father. Like Michael, who bullies and instigates and can only act selfishly, Pegeen has become a temperamental steam roller to reinforce the surest sense of self she knows. Drawing largely from her fertile imagination, Pegeen also envisions herself as becoming what she wants from Christy. She at first encourages him to become the romantic hero, but soon, through a mutual interplay of language, she experiments with that image for herself.

Despite her coarse appearance the first words Pegeen speaks image her desire for the romantic life. As the play opens, she verbally sketches a

portrait of Margaret Flaherty, a rudimentary romantic heroine. Making a list for her trousseau, she says, "six yards of stuff for to make a yellow gown. A pair of lace boots with lengthy heels on them and brassy eyes. A hat's suited for a wedding-day. A fine tooth comb" (57). She envisions the finery that defines the ideal bride--yellow gown, lace boots, brassy eyes and all--a fine description for a woman dedicated to appearance. In this speech, says Mary C. King, at least momentarily action and language coincide in a type of self-referential "metadrama"(133-34). From this sketch we can imagine the exalted wedding ritual and the man who will take part in it with her. Yet when the prospective groom Shawn arrives and she barely notices him, we see that though romantic concepts form in her mind, they find no correlative in life without a worthy man to help her act them out.

Pegeen is dissatisfied, poised between the romantic life she envisions and the mundane existence she must live. The fine clothes she talks about and the peasant dress she wears point up the great distance between romance and reality, observes Innes (64). One trait that she does not possess to help her live out a more complete identity is language. In two main scenes with Christy she initially flatters him into believing himself the hero, by using the attributive strain of language discussed earlier. Then, when her public self seems threatened by his actions, she uses coarse, prosaic language to bludgeon him until he finally persuades her of his sincerity. But gradually, through interaction with Christy, Pegeen sees herself capable of becoming his match.

Since this shy young fellow in front of her seems unwilling to talk in her first time alone with him, Pegeen continues the pattern of "coaxing" him begun by the town. Having heard about his great misdeed she now craves more details of the exotic story. She uses attributive language keyed

to his appearance, delighting in his "little small feet," his "quality name" and his "handsome. . . noble brow" (79). To convince him and herself that he matches the cultural paradigm, she exaggerates because ordinary life here demands expansive and potent emblems to transform it. Still unsure of herself, Pegeen chooses to concentrate instead on guessing about this hero whose inner being mystifies ordinary mortals. "Fiery fellows with great rages when their tempers' aroused" (81)--this is how she describes the ideal poet-hero. And by telling Christy these men "are your like," she binds him to a rich tradition, in her mind anyway. Actually, these larger-than-life fellows, with "blind rages tearing. . . within," more closely describe the elder Mahon, of whom Christy now speaks in order to satisfy her demands for a more thrilling narrative. Regarding Pegeen's ability to persuade Christy, both Skelton (J. M. Synge, 128) and Price (164) comment that she entices him to believe the truth of the image, in effect helping to create the hero herself. When Christy recounts his father's misadventures, Pegeen listens intently, growing more satisfied because his language matches her sense of who he is. She believes her envisioned hero--someone who performs brave deeds and speaks poetically--has arrived. Yet the possibility that she herself can take action to become changed does not occur as yet to her.

Since cruelty, violence and the threat of death are so intimately experienced in Mayo, Pegeen naturally uses crude language to intimidate Christy into submission when she finds he has linked arms with the town women in an intimate tableau. Angrily pouncing on the girls with a vengeance, Pegeen lashes out because they appropriate her property and make her look foolish. Using "town-like" language she tells him that a hanged man was put in a "narrow grave, with cheap sacking wrapping him round, and pour down quicklime on his head" (107). Heaped in such

abundance, these words convey the repulsive way she uses language to threaten him. She then dangles the spectre of certain hanging in front of him by suggesting that town gossip could cause his "fine, stout neck" to sway, so that after a "half an hour, in great anguish" he would die. She succeeds in intimidating him as he puts on his boots to leave.

However, Christy does not conform to the traditional pattern of masculinity that Pegeen knows. Accustomed as she has been to the male being either victim or abuser, she does not know men with his tendency toward self-reflection. When Christy mournfully reflects on returning to his solitary wandering separated from feminine society, Pegeen does not believe him, insisting that he must have had the company of "thousands" of girls. As he continues introspectively describing his feelings, she calls him the "oddest walking fellow" she has ever met. Pegeen is gradually but surely won over by Christy's admiring and longing phrases; although she still does not comprehend the essential self he has begun to reveal to her, she does respond to the language he uses to describe it.

Up to now, this young woman has envisioned herself as a bride, but one without a suitable groom. She has felt herself capable of becoming a romantic heroine, but one without the necessary hero to complete the image for her. Now, as the object of Christy's budding ardor, Pegeen can only respond minimally, in a noncommitted if more sympathetic manner. Because of her lack of experience in looking within, and the absence of a language to express the resultant feelings, she can only put him off. Yet she does respond to his inclusion of her in his vision of the future, a vision she will come to share. This scene ends with Pegeen, for the first time perhaps, on unsure ground with another human being, a man with whom she will discover unexplored but imagined aspects of identity.

Part IV: True Poetry and Inner Landscape

While Synge has Christy periodically succumb, as we have seen, to the town's insistence that he become their imaged hero, the author also has him speak, in his scenes with Pegeen, from an essential self defined by qualities like sensitivity, creativity and imagination. In the two scenes just examined from Pegeen's point of view, her perspective sharply contrasts to Christy's: intent on preserving her partial, public identity, Pegeen wants him to fill a need in her and she uses strong rhetorical language to manipulate him into doing so. Christy, however, equally intent on becoming congruent with his interior, at the same time describes his essential self to her. His progress toward a stable authentic identity is a slow-moving one, marked by some uncertainty. Although at first overwhelmed by Pegeen's apparently superior, strongly manipulative language, Christy wins her over in stages, persuading her with the poetic strain that clusters around his time alone with her. When in her company he uses "true poetry" that, while authentically expressing his best self, anticipates the merging with another in love. Unlike the false poetry that momentarily shored up a fragile self-image, true poetry heightens experience, enabling him to invent an identity apart from external influence. In a real sense, Synge has not just two characters but two divergent languages mirroring divergent modes of being meet in a dialectic that moves toward synthesis and resolution in the third act love scene. In these climactic moments Synge's powerful poetry accomplishes a

marriage of like-minded, as well as like-speaking, lovers. For each character, language becomes a mode of experience because Christy with Pegeen gropes toward a way to live out in words as well as action a unique identity that at once individualizes and interlinks them.

This true poetry begins by describing landscapes, first those of loneliness. When Christy first arrives in Mayo he comes speaking a poetry to Pegeen that describes how and where the drama of his life had taken place. As a young man who has obviously suffered from feelings of anxious apartness--he thinks himself "born lonesome"--his past experience becomes played out in natural territories similar to those country settings where he had spent his youth. He expresses himself through imagery symbolic of loss, separation and despondency. Always alone, always in the dark, always within sight but out of reach of the other, the woman whom he imagines can redeem him, Christy finds correlatives in nature that match his mood. Then, when he gets to know Pegeen and feels her admiration, his language begins to gently curve towards her, enveloping her as its subject; at this point, landscapes become ameliorated and illuminated by the presence of this, his ideal woman. And finally, when the time seems appropriate in their courtship, he plays out for her a future drama in which they act out roles as lovers amid a transformed natural scene, creating an enchanting interlude unmatched for its lyric intensity.

As soon as he begins talking we hear that Christy sounds different from any of the other characters, since nature, for him, provides a means for expressing inner experience as well as influencing his actions. The Christy that the town had ignored in favor of their own image emerges in his first scene with Pegeen as shy, lonely and apparently sensitive to the natural world in which he has lived and traveled. Evidently won over by the

kindness shown him and eager to speak about his experience, he ingenuously begins "talking free" to Pegeen. About his past he says, "There wasn't anyone heeding me in that place saving only the dumb beasts of the field" (83). As a boy alone he had spent his time, he tells her,

abroad in the dark night poaching rabbits. . .as happy as the sunshine of St. Martin's Day, watching the light passing the north or the patches of fog, till I'd hear a rabbit starting to screech. . . . I'd come walking down where you'd see the ducks and geese sleeping in the highway of the road.

(83)

Demonstrating a singular ability to watch and listen to what went on around him, Christy uses his impressions to inspire a highly associative imagination, which in turn could produce this type of language. Long, loosely joined phrases weighted with heavily sensory details confirm an ability to create a kind of language wedded to a life source.

In his Munster hometown, however, the culture did not encourage expression of sensitivity. No one "heeded" him, since "real" Irish men like his father are judged according a masculine ideal, the loud talker adept at drinking, smoking and pursuing women. Christy had apparently failed on all counts. As his father will later corroborate, Christy's gift of language translated into his being a "talker of folly" and his appreciation for things natural into "fooling over little birds." Until his arrival in Mayo, when he finds himself alone with a woman whom he admires, Christy says, "there wasn't a person in Ireland knew the kind I was" (83). The effect that these verbal attributes have on us, says Bernard Laurie Edwards, is to regard Christy as a more integrated person who finds simple things in nature meaningful (12). And others comment that Christy's essential qualities like

his truthfulness about his father's character, his capacity for love, his shyness and his poetic abilities render him admirable and limit the comic way we view him (Smith 382; Grene 139).

"What kind" he was can be readily seen in the imaginative verbal landscapes he creates. In the nighttime poaching scene above, Christy's tone seems light-hearted, his view of nature almost prelapsarian. Away from his father's spiteful influence this young man could revel in the plenitude around him, feeling a part of the living landscape. But, in the interim exile from home, he has developed another attitude toward himself. As he has "walked the world," escaping from the consequences of his deed, he has felt anxious and separated from himself and others. In his way of thinking, the presence of another, a woman, would bring an end to the loneliness and a possibility of connectedness in love. So as he now narrates it to Pegeen, the drama of his recent days spent traveling on the road is played out in his imagination as Christy the solitary, suffering man caught up in landscapes of loneliness. Here in these static scenes, he finds himself in an unfriendly, even alien, environment full of stony land, fences, darkness and silence that envelop him and separate him from the female at the center, out of his reach. He uses imagery that contrasts to blighted nature, however, when describing that which he does not have: there, where women are, light and laughter and liveliness await the fortunate man who conquers distance to reach them. In his alienated state, then, Christy sees the woman as his deliverer from loneliness into wholeness through interdependence in love.

As the evident "other," out of his ken by virtue of her sheer magnitude, Pegeen focuses Christy's imagination and provides him the opportunity to relive his exile. At one point in Act II, he responds to Pegeen's doubt about

his feelings of loneliness by saying, "I was lonesome all times and born lonesome, I'm thinking, as the moon of dawn" (111). He had grown to think of himself as an outsider, by his very nature different and separated by that difference from others. Although brief respite could be had while out "poaching" in the evening countryside, Christy had to leave what home he knew to feel completely isolated. Now, as he talks to Pegeen in Act I, he says,

I've seen none the like of you the eleven days I am walking the world, looking over a low ditch or a high ditch on my north or south, into stony scattered fields, or scribes of bog, where you'd see young limber girls, and fine prancing women making laughter with the men, (81)

In this tableau an impotent Christy as outsider looks on at the animated scene, separated from it by imaged "ditches" and relegated to wander benighted landscapes alone. Christy's concept of nature has changed drastically, moving from being a source of comfort to an objective reflection of isolation.

Struggling with Pegeen's wrath in Act II, and the spectre of returning to his outcast's existence, Christy relives the past, this time creating a similar scene of emotional disjunction, but with more strikingly desolate images.

He says,

It's well you know it's a lonesome thing to be passing small towns with the lights shining sideways when the night is down, or going in strange places with a dog nosing before you and a dog nosing behind, or drawn to the cities where you'd hear a voice kissing and talking

deep love in every shadow of the ditch, and you passing on with
an empty hungry stomach failing from your heart. (109)

Significant in this speech are images that reflect his life apart from human interaction, images that enable him to reexperience the pain of simultaneous loneliness and longing. "Lights shining sideways" at him in the dark; dogs "nosing" around him now replacing friendly ducks and geese; voices "kissing and talking deep love" reminding him of the drama unfolding without him; and his continuing on his way feeling "empty" at the emotional core he calls "heart": each image, whether those he sees or hears or feels, indelibly re-etches the experience, intensifying it as he explains the emotional territory through which he has traveled. And now when it seems that the woman with whom he could find wholeness will again move from his reach, Christy feels compelled to recreate the devastation he felt as a "fallen spirit" separated from a source of vitality.

We have been examining up to now Christy's slow but steady growth toward becoming a more authentic self. What this brief scene does is illustrate, first, his essentially fragile identity and, second, his ability to image in the service of the self, in a movement toward becoming that sometimes falters as he examines imaginative alternatives through language. Just as he had looked to nature for inspiration and imaged the woman metaphorically, he essentially duplicates the process in the scene just before this one with Pegeen, at the opening of act II, when we see him alone in the shebeen. In sharp contrast to the dark night's happenings, this bright morning finds perceptions from a new spectrum coloring his speech, at least for as long as his wavering sense of identity will allow. Using language as he does to organize his thoughts and sort through possibilities for action, he momentarily accepts the others' overblown hero-vision as his

own. Christy envisions his future, finding his imagery in the abundance of objects that surround him-scores of plates, glasses and bottles, to say nothing of Pegeen's boots which he intimately caresses. He dares to sketch a future, one based not upon the principle of becoming who he is, but instead upon who he thinks these people see in him. In response to the cultural paradigm, Christy contorts himself into a supposed future self. "I will be stalking around, smoking my pipe and drinking my fill," he says (95), but this self quickly shimmers out of focus since it is built upon a false reality. Christy seems willing to sacrifice his authentic, sensitive interior to achieve success on their terms.

The archetypal feminine voice gains substance as the very real Pegeen supplants the ideal woman envisioned in the landscapes of loneliness in the second scene between the two, the one in which Christy begins to lose hope of remaining in Mayo. Her voice and form give literalness to what was for him a desire as he directs his thoughts to Pegeen herself, creating images for and about her. Nearing the lowest ebb of his despondency, he says that a "lovely handsome woman" like her would know nothing about his pain or loneliness since she must have a community of admirers-men and "infant children" thronging to hear her voice as she travels country roads (111).

Christy the artist grounds the ideal of womanly beauty within the dimension of sensuality, his feelings of isolation modulating toward anticipation when this scene comes to a close. Pegeen asks him to stay and with "rapture" he brings his image of her into sharper focus: a future scenario would find him hearing her words "feeling his ears," seeing her look "meeting his eyes," and watching her "loafing in the warm sun and rinsing [her] ankles" at night (113). With this portrait an absolute version of Pegeen materializes as more than a sum of her parts. Displaying the

same poetic skill as when he described his earlier edenic life, he now links the feminine with the natural: Pegeen basks in the warm sun as her adoring lover watches. He says he will "rinse her ankles" in the evening, a ritual of almost chaste intimacy, yet one with more than slightly erotic undertones. If their courtship were to continue, interaction on many levels including the physical could take place. Until then, language will create the possibility of a real courtship. These rapturous words that anticipate a reality seem to engage only him in an autoerotic exercise that, while nullifying Pegeen's own pallid instrumental language, does not fully persuade her. And though he takes a more active part Christy still "looks on" in this reverie, not yet a full participant. Speaking sincerely out of his need, if only imaginatively, to span the distance between him and the feminine other, he demonstrates a growing skill at creating a powerfully evocative cosmos, one that prefigures the climactic love scene when image becomes incarnate in their love. This scene, says Denis Johnston, in its dignity and eloquence is "unequaled in Irish literature" (36).

On a soft, summer-like afternoon, the warm wave of past-game excitement still awash over them, Christy and Pegeen once more engage each other in conversation. Exultant and emboldened by his success in the public arena, Christy now turns his attention to Pegeen, who becomes the subject of his poetry as well as the object of his desire. He opens himself entirely to her, revealing his passion as he creates an atmosphere so seductive as to be irresistible, even to the unyielding Pegeen. Calling her his "crowning prize," he asks her to marry him. When she demurs, he creates an imaginative drama of their future, one cast in language replete with an almost organic confluence of imagery, each image running like a vegetable shoot from the preceding one. Again he looks to nature as he once

more brings a landscape into existence, this one of mutual dependence and love: "when the airs is warming in four months or five," he says, "it's then yourself and me should be pacing Neifin in the dews of night, the times sweet smells do be rising, and you'd see a little shining new moon maybe sinking on the hills" (147). When he had earlier mentioned "Neifin" the mountainous region was the scene of his lonely wandering; now the place becomes a setting almost saturated in the sights, smells and feel of nature, the most sensual Christy can conceive.

When Pegeen "playfully" asks him to further describe what they would be in his this fanciful place, complimenting him as well on his "eloquence," Christy responds with two speeches unmatched for their frankly sensual poetry. Through a series of liquified images he hopes to thaw any trace of remaining coolness in her. He says, "you'll feel my two hands stretched around you, and I squeezing kisses on your puckered lips till I'd feel a kind of pity for the Lord God in all ages setting lonesome in his golden chair" (147). "Let you wait," he continues,

to hear me talking till we're astray in Erris when Good
Friday's by, drinking a sup from a well, and making mighty
kisses with our wetted mouths, or gaming in a gap of sunshine
with yourself stretched back unto your necklace in the flowers
of the earth. (149)

In addition to the imagery suggestive of the liquescent state of lovemaking, Christy also creates for her the sensation of his touch, the pleasurable pressure she will feel from both his hands and his mouth. Through his imagery the poet engages all the senses of his listener in order to replicate lovemaking, but he further seduces her through his cadences and rhythm. Pegeen not only imaginatively participates in seeing, touching and tasting

the future experience he conceives for them, but she also feels the rhythm that pulses in his words. His piled-on, periodic sentences contain phrases of approximately equal length that, when followed one on another, seem incessant. This almost hypnotic chain of words overpowers with its intensity. Eugene Benson calls attention to Synge's use of rhythm, intense cadence and metaphor that creates the "most rapturous love duet of modern drama" (129).

These two speeches signal the demise of the man who suffers as he looks on from the outside at love. He has been replaced by the artist who creates from that suffering his own richly animated, lush and love-filled universe, one who now takes center stage to live out the love previously denied to him. With woman now fully framed in nature--Pegeen reclines in the lovely vignette, all but covered on flowers--language not only authenticates inner experience, as did his memory of isolation, it also renders action possible, as do these landscapes of interdependence. For, while Christy images future action, he brings into being a present love, and the scene becomes all the more sensual for its relative absence of actual physical contact. Movement between the two mirrors rhythmic poetry. Pegeen at first resists his tone of subdued sensuality; she then becomes passive, finally responding by degrees until she succumbs to his urgent insistence.

These passages describing lovemaking lead to several more that portray, in peculiarly Irish hyperbole, a Pegeen transfigured by love. Christy's unique poetry rescues these speeches from mediocre, over-blown "blarney," however, since his own sensibility leavens exaggeration with unembellished phrases culled from nature. Alan Price refers to Christy's "assured exactness" of imagery in these passages (170). Thus, while "mitered bishops" strain like holy prophets in paradise to see Christy's as

another Helen of Troy, she herself strays through creation with a "nosegay" tucked into her shawl (149). And, though the "light of seven heavens" may shine from this muse, her influence guides him to "spear salmons" in the local river (149). As in earlier days of darkness, Christy will be out in nature, but, unlike those times, he will find with Pegeen solace in the union of life-giving forces, the woman and nature.

Through Christy's own strenuously expansive language, his "poet's talking" that Pegeen says evinces "bravery of heart," she herself comes to match his own tone and becomes something of the woman he had envisioned. In order to convince her of his sincerity and to persuade her to participate in his reverie, Christy uses the most potent language possible, giving life to landscapes that frame her. In discussing Christy's use of language to color experience, several critics call attention to the reshaping quality of a poetry so intense that it releases him to an expanded sense of self (Edwards 14; Deane 140; Bigley 163; Thornton 140). How could this young woman not be moved by the efforts of the first man who gives shape to her own half-formed images of herself?

The peasant girl with feet firmly fixed in the mundane now moves toward a transformation of her own. At the end of their time together in this scene, his role as pursuer and hers as the pursued shift because Pegeen believes what he has been saying: she nows sees a figuration of romantic heroism--her own--and she attempts to use language as he does. At first Pegeen seeks to make Christy into an image, remarks Edwards, but she instead becomes part of his imaginings (11). When she accompanies him in those nighttime journeys, she says, she will be "a great hand at coaxing bailiffs, or coining funny nicknames for the stars of night" (149). As they touch for the first time in an embrace, she glows "radiantly" as she says, "I'll be burning

candles from this day out to the miracles of God have brought you from the south" (149).

Their next several interchanges constitute a *pas de deux* of speeches evenly matched both in length and intensity. Pegeen becomes, says Bourgeois, Christy's equal, if not superior, in the "game of imaginative love-making" (206). Their scenes together, which had begun with opposition between two modes of expression, have progressed to a transitional state as Pegeen gradually accepts Christy's perspective. This dialectic between them now culminates in a synthesis of sorts, since Christy's manner of speaking infuses both pairs. The lovers address the past and the present as this scene comes to a close.

Christy: It's miracles and that's the truth. Me there toiling a long while, and walking a long while, not knowing at all I was drawing all times nearer to this holy day.

Pegeen: And myself a girl was tempted often to go sailing the seas till I'd marry a Jew-man with ten kegs of gold, and I not knowing at all there was the like of you drawing nearer like the stars of God.

Christy: And to think I'm long years hearing women talking that talk to all bloody fools, and this the first time I've heard the like of your voice talking sweetly for my own delight.

Pegeen: And to think it's me is talking sweetly, Christy Mahon, and I the fright of seven townlands for my biting tongue. Well the heart's a wonder, and I'm thinking there won't be our like in Mayo for gallant lovers from this hour to-day. (151)

The dreadful past now completely recedes in favor of the passionate present for Christy. His former aimless wandering through empty landscapes becomes a journey with a purpose since this painful exile leads to Pegeen. He even finds meaning in his rejection by others because her present words, her own form of poetry, are spoken for him. And the self-directed girl who sought treasure instead of truth also has been replaced by a budding poetess who incredulously seems to ask the same question that Christy had earlier posed, "Is it me?" For Pegeen Flaherty to associate herself openly with "talking sweetly" means that she has accepted, for now anyway, the process by which Christy allows true poetry to flow from an essential self, uninterrupted by selfish motives. And to prove this she uses Christy's own word, "heart," to describe this guileless, transparent self. He has shown her that, contrary to her way of thinking, becoming takes precedence over doing. Thomas Whitaker observes that at this moment Pegeen reaches her fullest equivalent to Christy's parallel romantic image (17).

Unfortunately, the "gallant lovers" do not actually live out the vision since Pegeen cannot sustain her new found role against the tidal pressure of social ridicule. When she says she will not "lose [her] heart strings" to him, she bitterly and ironically reverses her earlier pledge that claimed the heart as a "wonder." Fearing loss of pride, she publicly shatters their imaged as well as real romance by denouncing its method of inception: she calls Christy an "ugly liar" whose fictitious "mighty talk" she never believed. With Pegeen's reversal, Synge gives dramatic forcefulness: to this tragicomic figure whose fearful and puritanical temperament makes it impossible for her to accept her imaginative experience with Christy, someone who outdistances her in his growth.

In response to her rejection Christy first expresses denial, then desperation when he thinks about returning to the barren outer regions of life. Still using true poetry to express the spectre of loss, he describes desolate experience in yet another landscape, this one of isolation but with a difference. "And I must go back into my torment is it," he asks,

or run off like a vagabond straying through the Unions with
the dusts of August making mud stains in the gullet of my
throat, or the winds of March blowing on me till I'd take an
oath I felt them making whistles of my ribs within.

(163)

Both the form that his speech takes and the imagery that infuses it echo to the earlier landscape through which he wandered, but this one clearly shows the influence of his experience with Pegeen. No longer a blank canvas for his emotions to color, this living landscape devitalizes with a distorted sensuousness that he associates with her. This particular view of nature--its dust clogging his throat, rendering the poet speechless and its wind blasting his body, rendering the lover invisible--becomes an agent of the destruction he feels emanating from her now. In his next response he has separated the woman from the nature to which she was linked, saying "there's torment in the splendor of her like...what did I want crawling forward to scorch my understanding at her flaming brow?" (163). The woman whose warmth had comforted and inspired him now radiates a bitter heat that harms him. Loneliness, once transformed by love, undergoes a seachange once again, this time into loss. The woman who had helped define him as poet/lover moves from giver of life and identity to agent of obliteration. And loss of woman, to this young man, means loss of

authentic identity based upon interdependence and commitment to wholeness through love.

We have seen the evolution of several potential identities for Christy. By this time in Act III where those possibilities conflict, we also know, as does he, that there are more choices than the roles of victim/abuser played by Shawn and Old Mahon. He had arrived a victim, sporadically imitated an abuser, but steadily moved toward an original and authentic identity, contrary to what Innes says about Christy's having no identity except that given to him (66). But here, except for a brief, abortive attempt to win Pegeen back by "murdering" his father again--clearly a misdirection of energy--Christy's movement toward that ideal self, as it can be discovered through language, virtually ends when he describes his loss in those landscapes above. From here on out he quickly adapts himself to circumstance and the reality that, in his words, "if its a poor thing to be lonesome, it's worse maybe to go mixing with the fools of earth" (165). The town had wanted him to come in from the outside in order to transform their disconnected state, while Christy sought entry into a place where he had imagined connectedness as existing. Now this irony becomes apparent to him, and he consciously decides to embrace the incomplete identity that the town had imaged earlier. As summarized in Thornton's observation that Christy becomes in actuality the hero the town had imaged him to be (139), most critical opinion fails to take the incomplete nature of this identity into account.

Since Synge has so clearly distinguished each choice that Christy has made through language patterns, the character's present course can be charted. First of all, he speaks no true poetry again. All his responses indicate his decision to live up, or in this case down, to what others want

him to be. As he futilely attempts to regain respect he says that surely Pegeen will reconsider and he will be a "proven hero in the end of all" (167). A bit later when the noose seems inevitable he looks again to Pegeen and asks, "what is it you'll say to me and I after doing it [the murder] this time in the face of all?" (169). Both observations--that he is a "proven hero" "doing it" for all to see--reflect his attitude: action, the kind taken by the hero who values accomplishment over inner growth, will now define him.

Christy's last two last speeches before he leaves Mayo for good, one a command to his father and the other a farewell to the town, demonstrate his choice to renounce the sensitive poet who seeks congruence between inner and outer experience. To his cowering father he says, "I will [go with you] then, like a gallant captain with his heathen slave. . . . I'm master of all fights from now" (173). Not simply have roles been reversed, with Christy becoming abuser to Old Mahon's victim. On a more profound level, by subjugating another as he himself had so miserably been subjugated, Christy dishonors the self brought into being in dialogue with Pegeen. In a strongly exaggerated metaphor--the gallant captain to the heathen slave--to show his acceptance of the power-based social hierarchy, he addresses his father yet subtly demonstrates his keen awareness of the audience he now must impress. He will be master of "fights," the pointless brawls men revere and woman love to hear about, and we can imagine Christy relating tales of his misadventures down the road he will travel.

Finally, in a tone saturated with sarcasm, he turns to his erstwhile torturers, the people of Mayo who instigated the "lie" that has transformed him. By offering his "blessings" to all of them at once, he returns Pegeen to her position as an undifferentiated one among many. He says to them, "you've turned me into a likely gaffer in the end of all," one he says who will

"go romancing through a romping lifetime" (173). The "likely gaffer" he now recognizes, with some bitterness, signifies his identity and derives meaning only from the public perspective, not from any essential quality of his own. He has consciously chosen to become the playboy, the action oriented, pseudo-hero who would sacrifice love for "romancing" and walking with his love through vital landscapes for "roaming" through villages of willing admirers.

In the coda to the play, after Christy has left, Pegeen bemoans the loss of the only real "playboy" in wild, western Ireland. To critic Henn, her loss is "absolute, beyond comfort" (58), while Edwards says she now understands the existential emptiness of her own condition (12). But these observations miss Synge's point about authenticity and the renunciation of it in this play. In fact, it is Christy who has lost: he has taken the worst of Mayo with him and left the best of himself behind. As they have focused on the positive nature of Christy's choice, an overwhelming majority of commentators see only triumph in his decision at the end of the play. Pointing to his courage, his grace under pressure and his ability to use language creatively, they maintain that he has been transformed into the hero the town wanted, a "real hero" who renounces the company of fools to gain access to his best self. Speaking for this majority, Una Ellis-Fermor says that Mayo witnessed the "growth, like a Japanese paper flower dropped into a bowl of water, of Christy Mahon's new self" (177). What most fail to see is that this choice validates more than reproves town values. Among the few who see ambiguity in the ending C. L. Innes speaks of the failure of a poetry that exploits narcissism (74). And Eugene Benson comes closer to seeing the negative aspects of Christy's decision when he says that the lad's poetry

"symbolizes his progressively dangerous identification with the corrupt world of the villagers" (122).

When Christy Mahon arrived in Mayo he brought with him a sense that he was different, set apart from other men. He also brought a capacity for expressing those qualities that defined him. Judging him solely on the basis of his one act of defiance, the town in fact misjudged him, thinking he could provide the means of escape from their collective circumstance. Christy acted on the acceptance they offered, using the opportunity to work through the poetic process, thereby creating through language a self independent of the false cultural paradigm. And for a time he did measure up to their expectations by giving them a sense of community, of connection. With Pegeen he shared his development toward authentic selfhood. However, since the town's image was built on a lie and since Pegeen could not sustain the imagination to live out their created truth, Christy chooses the path of nonresistance. In the face of possible death and certain isolation he renounces authentic identity because he believes it cannot exist apart from the woman who helped create it. Instead, he adopts a way of being that values using language to intimidate others rather than to express and create shared selves. A change has been wrought in Christy, but not one that signals the birth of a triumphant, heroic identity, as has been widely suggested. Christy instead chooses to become the false face he has periodically worn, a poet whose language will reflect the false values of the culture that helped create him.

Notes

¹ See, respectively, Maurice Bourgeois, John Millington Synge and the Irish Theater (London: Constable and Co., 1913) 195; T. R. Henn, "The Playboy of the Western World," The Plays and Poems of J. M. Synge, ed. T. R. Henn (London: Methuen & Co., 1963) 56-58; Una Ellis-Fermor, The Irish Dramatic Movement (London: Methuen & Co., 1939) 177-79; Norman Podheretz, "Synge's 'Playboy': Morality and the Hero," Essays in Criticism, 3 (July 1953), rpt. in Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Playboy of the Western World, ed. Thomas R. Whitaker (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1969) 70-74; and Patricia Meyer Spacks, "The Making of the Playboy," Modern Drama 4 (December, 1961) 76-84.

² John Millington Synge, "The Playboy of the Western World," J. M. Synge: Collected Works Vol. IV, ed. Robin Skelton (London: Oxford University Press, 1968) 171. All subsequent quotations are from this edition and will be cited parenthetically within the text.

³Liam DePaor, "Ireland's Identities," The Crane Bag of Irish Studies 3.1 (1979):354-61. DePaor talks about the Irishman as a bohemian who remains uninvolved while seeing existence, like the one played out in this shebeen, as a "show"(354). And W. B. Yeats, in Synge and the Ireland of His Time (Churchtown, Dundrum, Ireland: The Cuala Press. 1911) discusses the Irishmen who, after being alone all day, listen to each other's long and meditative cadences at evening time in a public house (29).

⁴ Addressing the extended adolescence of Irishmen because of enforced subjugation in a patriarchal culture, Conrad M. Arensberg and Solon T. Kimball, in Family and Community in Ireland (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968) points to "boys" of 45-50 having to defer to their fathers as long as the "old fellows" live (55).

Chapter 4

LORCA AND SUBJUGATION OF THE SELF

One of the introductory questions derived from Miller's observations--what sort of poetic form could be successfully incorporated into realistic drama--directly impinges upon Federico Garcia Lorca's career as a dramatist. The interest among early modern dramatists in the question of what technique would best describe the dialectic between the selves is not limited to any one tradition; as stated earlier in the Introduction, continental playwrights experimented more widely with form and style than did those in early modern England and America, but in Lorca's Spain diverse dramatic invention largely lagged behind until Lorca gave renewed impetus to it. In wrestling with the problem of technique that informs the drama of human relationships, he progressed from non-realistic, deeply poetic plays to the realism of his folk trilogy, concentrating on the stage image--that found in setting, gesture, costume--rather than relying solely on the image found in poetic language. In his choice of technique, moreover, Lorca provides a connecting link between Anderson and Synge on the one hand and Lawrence on the other. Like Synge, who spoke of finding a dramatic language for his characters that was "rich" as well as realistic, Lorca spent his life as a playwright developing a style that retained poetic qualities as it became more realistic. "The theatre is the poetry that is lifted out of the book and becomes human," he said, adding that the drama "requires that the characters which appear on the stage

wear a suit of poetry and at same time that their bones, their blood be seen" (qtd. in Smoot 59).

Another of the introductory questions, the one about the possibility of mediating between the private and public selves for authentic identity, also figures into Lorca's plays. He turns to his native Andalusia, and especially to the lives of Andalusian women bound by oppressive social structures that limit choices for acting out an identity. In the play chosen for this study--The House of Bernarda Alba--Lorca has created stage imagery associated with women that reflects whether or not each can take action to vitalize with her private, essential self the public identity conferred on her by her culture.

The most influential Spanish playwright of the twentieth century, Federico Garcia Lorca (1898-1936) first gained a reputation as a fine lyrical poet before turning in earnest to playwriting in 1930. Lorca's wide experimentation in the drama, moreover, helped to open up a provincial Spanish theatre that had been dominated by writers who gave a mostly middle class audience the well-worn, neo-romantic forms it wanted for entertainment (G. Edwards 10). Outside Spain, says Manuel Duran, Lorca has been acclaimed as the "embodiment of the Spanish spirit, yet one whose work appeals to what is universal in all people" (1-2). Lorca had no intention, however, of foregoing poetry. "I have started working as a playwright," he said, "because I feel the need to express myself through drama. But there is no reason I should neglect pure poetry; on the other hand one can find pure lyrical poetry in a play as well as in a poem" (qtd. in Duran 11).

Most of the plays in the Lorca canon that predate his culminating folk trilogy are poetic and non-realistic in style. These earlier plays run the

gamut from puppet plays to those based on historical folk ballads to surrealist farce, culminating in the poetic and realistic tragedies that close out his career. Mariana Pineda (1927), an early success for Lorca, tells of an historical martyr for freedom whose life also symbolizes human alienation; its interest today lies in the production sets by Salvadore Dali and in Lorca's infusion of pessimism into an essentially romantic play. In The Shoemaker's Prodigious Wife (1930), a farce based on a folk ballad, Lorca stylizes characters and injects musical elements into poetic dialogue. The Love of Don Perlimplin for Belisa, in His Garden (1928) playfully tells the story of comic lovers who nevertheless become distinguished through Lorca's lyric poetry. Conceived during Lorca's exile in New York and influenced by the Surrealists, The Public (1930) in its use of dream images symbolizes love, death and decay as it mixes reality and fantasy with no separation between audience and stage. Dona Rosita the Spinster (1935) mirrors in its "language of flowers" the disintegration of a soul, as a woman waits for a lover who never returns.

Lorca's folk trilogy, on which his reputation now largely rests, begins as densely poetic and ends with a more realistic view of the Spanish woman. The first play in the trilogy, Blood Wedding (1933), incorporates a tragic plot of family rivalry and frustrated passion into a stylized and heavily poetic atmosphere that emphasizes a fate tied to natural earth processes. The second, Yerma (1934), tells the story of a woman, trapped by oppressive cultural values in a loveless marriage, who struggles for fulfillment, then succumbs to fate when she kills her husband. In the final play, The House of Bernarda Alba (1936), Lorca becomes interested in presenting more realistically the concept of the individual pitted against societal forces.

Two comments that Lorca made about The House of Bernarda Alba pertain particularly to this discussion. First, when he finished reading it to a group of friends just before his death, he said, "Not a drop of poetry! Reality! Realism!" (qtd. del Rio 151). And, second, in an introductory note to the play, he says, "these three acts are intended to be a documentary photograph." While it is true, as Edwin Honig says, that there are no supernatural, musical or pictorial effects to prevent the action from being determined by character and situation (219-220), we do not perceive this play as being as realistic as Lorca would have desired. When compared to the other two, densely poetic plays in the trilogy, Bernarda Alba does appear more realistic, as far as character and situation are concerned. But the play is not strict realism, either, since strains of imagery connected to the setting and to language build a poetic atmosphere that evokes human interiority. If photography reflects a momentary image that measures reality, then the house that belongs to Bernarda Alba becomes itself a photograph of her, but one that measures not exterior reality, but the false image of an appropriated cultural identity. Lorca's stark, monochromatic setting does connote a black-and-white photograph, but the dominant impression left is more of colorlessness than of "documentary" reality.

Critical opinion about Bernarda Alba has been varied, beginning with an early commentary by Edwin Honig that sees in its imagery a continuation of Lorca's artistic "quest for spiritual permanence through sensual reality" (198). Honig further maintains that, in Lorca's depiction of women as preservers of antiquated traditions that now devitalize and subdue creativity, the individual cannot be fulfilled by this society and he offers no resolution in this play (195-96). Many critics who follow Honig focus their attention, as he does, on the debilitating effect of the oppressive culture on

the woman: Manuel Duran says all of Lorca's work centers around "the suffering and the frustration of the Spanish woman" (9). Anthony Aratari calls this a "closed system of morality" that destroys the family it wants to protect (475), while Carolyn Galerstein traces the subversion of the individual to a politically as well as socially oppressive culture, represented in the person of Bernarda Alba (184, 188). Death as a theme that preoccupies Lorca also figures in the commentary by Pedro Salinas, who says Lorca inherited a "culture of death" from earlier Spanish artists (21), and by Howard T. Young, who discusses the mythic implications of Lorca's juxtaposition of love and death (212). Others see this play in terms of opposing forces: those whose instinctual values conflict with others' social reality (Wells 311); those who strive toward sexual fulfillment and those who oppose it (Sharp 231); and those individuals who are opposed by merciless forces, like Greek gods (Edwards 241). Finally, Roberta N. Rude and Harriet S. Turner provide insightful comments on opposing forces in Bernarda Alba, at one point saying that "land, money and social class dictate alliances set against instinct, the course of blood, the natural order" (75).

According to Lorca, Bernarda Alba portrays the lives of the "women in the villages of Spain." More than simply a background for Lorca's art, rural Andalusia is the "very marrow of his poetry," says Edward F. Stanton (55). Howard T. Young adds that, after Lorca's brief exile in New York, he returned as Yeats had done to his source of strength as an artist, finding his dramatic voice in Andalusian tradition (143). In Andalusia people have been, from the earliest of times, intimately connected to the land and to socially conservative views that uphold traditional values. Identity, then, insofar as it is conferred by the culture, becomes bound up in

preserving existing social structures. And so for Lorca's female characters conflict arises over issues not only of class, but also of gender and generation. In this play, Lorca emphasizes male/female relationships, but in a culture where social rank and respect for elders are valued.

In the Andalusian culture, the concept of family honor is paramount. Each social class believes that the one opposing it has more power than it deserves and will use it as a tool of exploitation.¹ To preserve power and minimize threat to themselves, some people present a positive appearance to others--a good face in bad times ("mal tiempo buena cara"). Since the family is the cornerstone of this society, one must therefore develop strategies to protect familial honor, because others will use personal information for their own gain. And for a woman in Andalusia honor means chastity. Insofar as living out an identity is concerned, her choices are few: she must either be sexually submissive within marriage, remain a virgin spinster, or be relegated to the morally corrupt fringes reserved for whores, mistresses and adulteresses. In this male-dominated culture, then, a woman may become a mother, the idealized vision of femininity or a jezebel, whose insatiable sexual appetite claims the man's strength. For if the family honor is to be preserved, the bride's virginity and the wife's fidelity must be a basic assumption on which the man relies. Therein lies his preoccupation with controlling female sexuality by misuse of his power, not simply to oppress the woman's body, but her spirit as well. Women in this culture must marry whom their families choose for them or they do not marry at all, and those who dare to follow their natural desires anyway become ostracized as social pariahs. Given these circumstances, this family of Alba women can respond only to the choices for identity offered them in this culture.

Although The House of Bernarda Alba represents the wider circumference of women's lives in rural Spain, Lorca distills cultural norms into the narrow circle of this particular Andalusian village, and from there into the center of the play, the Alba house. We come to see the Alba family as a microcosm of feminine experience encircled by the walls of the Alba house, itself then surrounded by the culture of Andalusian Spain in an indeterminate time. Women in the village whose lives filter in from outside illustrate the oppressive social structure: whether they are prostitutes, unfaithful married women, unmarried mothers, or docile engaged women, each suffers in the society for not controlling her sexuality. In this play Lorca points up the consequences to women when they try to act in an environment that so severely restricts choice.

Since only a limited number of choices is possible within the constraints of this time and place, conflict arises within the family when individuals do choose to act. Lorca constructs a spectrum of female experience and attitude, with fixed points at either end in the persons of Bernarda and her mother Maria Josefa. Each of these two women responds very differently, and each presents a model for the daughters, who are uncertain, to emulate. Stage language tracks experience in that some closely align themselves with Bernarda's way, which involves manipulating others to preserve a limited sense of self. Others, however, follow the example of Maria Josefa, whose imaginative language expresses choices for an authentically lived-out self, even in this oppressive society.

In the Andalusian microcosm that Lorca fashions here, the wife/mother identity conferred by the society offers parameters within which a woman can either see herself as being confined or being creative. Part One of this chapter shows how the character Bernarda Alba bypasses the choice to take

part in a dialectic between the public and private selves; instead, she takes the role of the man of the house, the oppressor who tries to keep women silent, to close them in, and to protect their reputations at all cost. For her Lorca uses images synonymous with her house to indicate an inauthentic self, one unable to express interiority or to allow it in others. Parts Two, Three and Four discuss how in Maria Josefa, Poncia and Adela the need to be more than simply a role persists: Lorca infuses social roles with strains of poetic imagery that reflect private selves unable because of time and circumstance to act upon those images that potentially authenticate identity.

Part I: The Stage Image and Inauthenticity

Lorca creates Bernarda Alba as a woman in a man's world, one who connects herself to the male tradition of appropriating control over both home and business. Her choice to act in consonance with the machismo ethic results in the virtual imprisonment of her daughters as she promotes the oppressive, male-centered values that control a threatening female sexuality, thereby limiting a woman's options to live out an autonomous self. Eric Bentley has noted that Bernarda represents a philosophy and a tradition in which the old ideal of honor proves destructive to more modern middle-class Andalusian women (Discovering 40). An almost unrelieved portrait of tyranny, she casts a formidable shadow through the rooms of her home, largely because she manipulates those under her influence. In this particular Andalusian village where women are either submissive wives or

ostracized whores, Bernarda as mother greatly fears the latter fate for her daughters. As a consequence, she dedicates herself to maintaining a "good face," a unified image of virtue, for others to see. The widowed mother of five grown daughters and the mistress of an estate, Bernarda struggles to protect the personal identity she has received from her culture.

Bernarda, then, subscribes to an identity ready made for her; that is, instead of being confined by an essentially constrictive female role, she will exercise power by becoming the man of the house. Not thinking, just giving orders, she relies on what she knows to do in order to reestablish her position of power when self doubt momentarily creeps in. For a "cajonuda" like Bernarda ² who fears most the loss of honor and resultant humiliation at the hands of an exploitive community, only the denial of reality, the suppression of fear, and harsh action toward others make internal sense. Several instances suggest that Bernarda does momentarily struggle with doubt, fearing not only loss of control over her daughters, but control over her own reasoning powers. Lear-like, she imagines herself slipping out of control and into something akin to her own mother's madness. But each time we see her feeling threatened in the first two acts, she denies the feeling and reverts instead to a mode of certainty, thus refusing to examine what has taken place within her.

Because Lorca has created in her a character who cannot express herself through poetic language, the strong images connected to the place serve as a correlative to her interior. As the material incarnation of her identity, Bernarda Alba's house embodies the cultural values that she has herself become. Bentley remarks that the house is "the main character of the play" (Discovering 41). The agent of the repressive culture outside on the irrepressible daughters within, Bernarda keeps a tight rein over them.

The place becomes, then, a symbolic image that reflects her own lack of personal identity, as well as her struggle to inhibit becoming in others. C. Brian Morris says the title defines the restrictive space the audience shares with the characters, and adds that this place that confines the privileged class is never referred to as a home; instead it is called at various times a mortuary, a madhouse, a prison, a nunnery, and a hell (129-138). In order to give the place a poetry of its own, one that symbolically mirrors Bernarda's public identity, Lorca constructs image patterns of silence, whiteness, clausturation, and heat.

For Bernarda the less said the better. She continually calls for "silence," this being both the first and the last word we hear her say. In his stage directions, Lorca describes a "great brooding silence" that permeates the stage space. Not simply the absence of sound, but an almost tactile force that creates a sense of foreboding, silence weighs heavily in this place, largely because of Bernarda's efforts to suppress words. Silence, says director Eric Bentley, becomes as eloquent as dialogue, so that when sounds do come, they seem amplified (Discovering 42). When Bernarda frequently beats on the floor with her cane, for instance, a staccato sound resonant of harsh command demands compliance. Commenting on the use of this cane in production, Carolyn Galerstein says it never is used to aid the character in walking; instead, it is a "threat and a weapon" that punctuates Bernarda's statements (187). Inhibiting in others language that potentializes a self, while at the same time terrorizing with a sound of her own, Bernarda's call for silence both embodies her desire for non-being within herself and non-becoming in others.

In addition to the silence here, whiteness functions symbolically in the play, showing Bernarda's obsession with purity. We see literal whiteness

most strongly in the walls themselves: in successive acts Lorca describes them as being "very white" in the outer, public room to "white" in the more interior sewing room to white bathed in blue-tinted light in the most interior patio. As we and the characters reach the interior of the house, comments Gwynne Edwards, we see in the cold, blue moonlight their coming nearer the fate of death (268). As an indication of a shift to a more sombre mood, as well as a shift to the nighttime setting of Act Three, the muted white color contributes to the emotional atmosphere. But in a more complex way, the whitewashed walls represent Bernarda's preoccupation with surface cleanliness, with keeping immaculate the surfaces that others see, much the same way as surface silence hides inner turmoil. If she can manage to keep unblemished her daughters' sexual reputations, perhaps Bernarda can preserve the family honor. The glaringly white walls of Act One, those seen by the one hundred mourners after her husband's funeral, become more muted, but the darkened walls in Act Three signal that Bernarda has lost control over those interior forces she fears.

Like silence that prevents harmful talk and whiteness that presents a blameless facade, the walls that encircle the Alba family represent entrapment and impenetrability. No one comes in or goes out of these "thick walls." An image of clausturation, of being sealed away, overpowers when Bernarda says of the mourning ritual, "We'll act as if we'd sealed up doors and windows with bricks."³ Keeping her mother under lock and key and allowing her daughters to glimpse the outside world only through cracks in the window shutters, Bernarda fears penetration because to penetrate is to know, and others may use that knowledge against her. Her walls, therefore, provide her with a margin of safety because nothing at

odds with cultural conformity will go beyond them to the hostile outside world.

A correlative image to that of thick, claustimating walls is felt in Lorca's use of the oppressive summer heat. Along with the dense, opaque walls comes the stifling heat that all but smothers those kept behind them. Heat magnifies the sense these characters feel of clausturation. As events unfold and tensions heighten, this tactile image of heaviness must of necessity be broken and relieved. Both Stanton (56, 67) and Sharp (230) discuss this sterile, desolate and sun-scorched interior of Andalusia, which Lorca will contrast to the seacoast, where he sees a possibility for freedom and hope. When she finds that her daughters have quarreled jealously over a man, Bernarda demands, "what scandal is this in my house in the *heat's heavy silence* ?" (188, italics mine). In this phrase Lorca effectively combines several of the images connected with this place that also characterize the woman herself.

Despite her efforts to silence, to whitewash or to contain the inevitable when all she has feared comes to pass, Bernarda the victimizer becomes victimized herself by the only choices she thought she could make. Just as she was unable to keep others silent or her walls spotless, so Bernarda does not succeed in keeping her daughters prisoners. Adela, the daughter who will not be silenced, runs to her room near the end of the play when she hears that her lover has been killed by her mother. Bernarda now becomes the one on the outside trying to get through a wall that separates her from her daughter. But walls have not hidden the truth about Adela from the villagers, any more than this bedroom door can conceal the dull thud that penetrates it now. The woman who beats on the floor with her cane, who strikes out at errant daughters, who pretends to shoot the male intruder--

this woman's attempts to control the uncontrollable render her not only powerless but pitiable. Edwards concludes that Bernarda is "no less the victim of society's tyranny than is Adela the victim of her mother's" (294). Her last word, "silence," spoken as her daughter lies dead at her feet, feebly echoes the emphatic imperative of the indomitable woman's entrance.

Part II: The Alluvial Imagination

Lorca creates another character in juxtaposition to Bernarda--her mother, Maria Josefa. Although she appears only twice, at the end of Acts One and Three, the intensity of her poetic language and unexpected actions make Maria Josefa a forceful character that others can use as counterpoint to Bernarda. Even though Lorca gives her few lines, notes Bentley, this character's words carry maximum weight (Discovering 41). She differs from her daughter by expressing a self that is currently constricted in a hostile environment, but which will not be silenced. In addition, since she has been a virtual prisoner, she values freedom and does not seek to manipulate others because she wants them to be free also. Her most important function, however, as both Gwynne Edwards and Robert Lima have observed, is to voice the younger women's desires and to image in her madness and imprisonment their future (273; 274).

Lorca indicates in Maria Josefa's language that she is not "insane," but rather is the character most in touch with reality. Sumner M. Greenfield

points out that she speaks the most lyrical passages and represents the "truth of higher reality" (458). At first, we believe her public image as a madwoman. Locked up in her daughter's home, the woman's disembodied voice shouts, "Bernarda. . . let me out ." When we finally get to see her in Act One, her demeanor seems to validate her image. Described by Lorca as being very old, her head and breasts bedecked with flowers, Maria Josefa drifts into the room, begging to be allowed to run away and get married. And again when we see her in Act Three, she enters carrying a lamb and singing to it as if it were a baby. The incongruity of an old woman adorned and ready to be married, or carrying a "baby" lamb, only reinforces the image of madness.

Creating an alluvial imagination that originates with the sea, Lorca finds in the sea the archetypal symbol of fertility, a life force that gives her imaginative passage to freedom from societal encumbrance. Ready to flee this land-locked place where womens' hearts turn to dust in sterile, oppressive surroundings, this "crazy" woman whose life is almost over presses forcefully against her prison bars, trying to get back to her place of birth, and back to a time when being a woman meant being fulfilled in marital union. Maria Josefa suggests, says Bentley, an earlier, more healthy time before tradition became so debilitating (Discovering 41). In her first scene, demanding to be set free so that she might wed and be happy, she says, "I want to get married to a beautiful manly man from the shore of the sea" (175). Called crazy, punished for her thoughts, Maria Josefa refuses to yield by being silent. To Bernarda, a woman must accept the reining of her sexuality, this submission symbolized by wearing black and shunning adornment. But eighty-year-old Maria Josefa openly celebrates a

sexuality whose actual time may have passed, but whose value she acknowledges still. She decorates herself with flowers and amethyst earrings. She wants to wear her lace mantilla and pearl necklace. These adornments emblemize the mating ritual that Maria Josefa remembers in image-filled language.

Even though he has her sound insane, Lorca grounds Maria Josefa's vision firmly in the only cultural roles she knows for a woman, those of wife and mother. In her mind, to live fully means to express the self creatively and imaginatively. By asking, "can't a lamb be a baby?" in her second scene, she really asks why this drab existence cannot be transcended by imagination. Manifesting an eerie presence, walking into the darkened room carrying a lamb, this old woman singing in the dark to her "baby" presents a pitiful image of motherhood that matches the lunacy of the earlier marriage scene. She meets Martirio, a granddaughter who substitutes for Bernarda as impatient warden in this scene and who asks her where the lamb came from. Maria Josefa's reply, that this animal in her arms is better than the void that the rest of them nurture, reinforces that she comes closer to truth than Martirio. When Martirio tells her to hush, she breathlessly infuses the night with an unabated vision of what she sees in her mind's eye. What follows reels out from a female psyche in an old Spanish woman's body, but Lorca has Maria Josefa speak for many women who lack freedom but continue to imagine it.

In this speech the sea again beckons, focusing her alluvial imagination on the place that for her objectifies peace, freedom and love. Jean J. Smoot notes that Lorca uses this water motif to express sexual needs and the rising awareness of them in the younger women (175). More importantly, however, he uses sound repetition and vivid imagery here to vitalize Maria

Josefa's compelling poetic vision that contrasts markedly with Bernarda's way of being. Previously she sought the "shore of the sea" as not only refuge but the scene of wedded bliss. In this instance, her sea-infused imagination conjures a waterfront coral cabin where she will nurture her baby, marking an outward movement from a central male/female, sexual union to a circumference where she envisions the ideal family triad. She cannot extricate herself physically from Bernarda's grasp, but she can forcefully exert her spirit by voicing powerful language, as she does here. If her body cannot move forward to the sea or back to the man, she will create a vivid universe in which sensation reigns for the purpose of accessing a vital self. "Just because I have white hair," she says

you think I can't have babies, but I can--babies and babies and babies. This baby will have white hair, and I'd have *this* baby, and another, and this *one* other; and with all of us with snow white hair we'll be like the waves--one, then another, and another. Then we'll all sit down and all of us will have white heads, and we'll be seafoam.

(206)

This whiteness of hair and seafoam differ from her daughter's insistence on the black of mourning, or the whiteness of her sterile walls. And these "babies and babies" could not exist in the nunnery that Bernarda wants to create. Sam Bluefarb notes that Maria Josefa exposes not only the sterility in this house, but also the "larger spiritual sterility" in the atmosphere (113). Coming as it does from the woman least likely to live it out, this speech presents poignant evidence of an empowered self. We hear and almost feel the orgiastic movement of the waves of humanity derived from the free play of sexuality. For Maria Josefa creativity is fertility: she can imagine a world in which she has produced multitudes of her own

kind, so many that she herself merges with them to become one in the sensation of mortal movement.

To show that Maria Josefa represents possibilities for authenticity, Lorca extends her vision even further, back to another time when not only marriage and family flourished, but also the extended community. "When my neighbor had a baby, " she says,

I'd carry her some chocolate and later she'd bring me some, and so
on-- always and always and always. . .I like houses, but open houses,
and the neighbor women asleep in their beds with their little tiny tots,
and the men outside sitting in their chairs. (206)

Lorca offers the idea here, for the only time in the play, that peace, love and well-being can be possible within the context of family or community. Certainly the prospect, put forth by Bernarda, of being surrounded by hostile villagers eagerly awaiting misfortune, differs sharply from this idyllic scene where the individual finds sustenance in the community. In times past, Lorca suggests, people cared for one another, each person accepting her place as a person of value. Continuity and connectedness becomes reflected in the repetition of "always," but now "open" houses through which people move freely have been replaced by Bernarda's fortress. By widening the circumference of Maria Josefa's imagination to include not only the couple and the family, but the community as a whole, Lorca creates a vision of wholeness that appears to have been dimmed by time.

Lorca empowers each woman--mother and daughter--with an individuality, yet only one becomes victimized by her actions. Roberta Rude and Harriet S. Turner have observed that, though locked in the center of fortified converging circles, Maria Josefa's self-knowledge effectively counters Bernarda's self-deception, making her more free and fruitful than

her daughter (82). As Bernarda is all rationality in order to preserve a fragile identity, so her mother is imagined sensation to create an even stronger one. Unlike Bernarda, who cannot deviate from a self-imposed role and ends embittered, Maria Josefa, though imprisoned, continues to create an undaunted self. One becomes empowered in a creative sea of generation, while the other ends dissolved in a sea of mourning.

Part III: Poncia as an Adaptive Self

Bernarda Alba's presence so permeates this play that whether she is on stage or not, her influence can be felt. By contrast, her mother enters twice, and briefly for those times; yet, as we have seen, she presents both a stark contrast to Bernarda's way of being as well as an alternative because of her vision for the other women to emulate. While several of the daughters fluctuate between the two poles, ranging themselves more closely to one end point than the other, Lorca places one woman at the fulcrum, the servant Poncia. Like Maria Josefa she grounds herself in sensation by living out an identity based upon the prevailing cultural idea of womanhood that she invests with her own essential self; that is, she has loved a man, borne children and has fully experienced her own sexuality, recognizing its ameliorative power. At the same time, like Bernarda, Poncia has learned to adapt to reality, placing a value on appearance and becoming an exponent for her mistress in ensuring Alba family honor. As Bernarda has adapted

to oppression by imitating it, Poncia adapts in this house to Bernarda. The cultural paradigm of authority becomes telescoped in these two women, for as wife is to husband and servant is to master, so Poncia is to Bernarda.

Lorca gives Poncia the role of mediator, one who both acknowledges the reality that women must act within a socially endorsed code of behavior while at the same time believing that women should attend to their interior voices. In the process of being with the daughters, then, she allows them access to Maria Josefa's philosophy, so stifled in Bernarda's house. A much less ephemeral, more earthy version of Maria Josefa, Poncia's close affinity to the sexual body characterizes her orientation to life, much as it had for the grandmother. As Poncia talks with the Alba daughters, she assumes a surrogate mother role, trying to bridge for them the wide chasm that separates Bernarda from her mother.

Poncia's sexual experience parallels that of Maria Josefa's: each woman revels in her physical being, seeing it as essential to the self. When she describes to the Alba daughters her courtship ritual, she images her suitor straining through the window bars, creating a visual analogue to sexual penetration. She presents them with an example of free expression of desire, much as their grandmother does. However, this more profane woman grounds her knowledge in her own experience, where there have been few manly men from the seashore; instead, there are sweaty, shirttailed suitors who fumble and fondle as prelude to lovemaking. Wise in the ways of this world, Poncia seems to provide the perfect liaison between these young women and experience outside these walls. By doing so, she affirms those values held by Maria Josefa, the woman whose imagination transcends these same walls.

In a notable scene that begins with Poncia commenting on the afternoon return of the reapers to the wheat fields, Lorca fuses past and future into a timeless present, much as he had done with Maria Josefa. But this is not Maria Josefa's seashore; it is the harvest-ready fields Poncia knows. As an older, married woman with experience, and one from a lower social class, Poncia describes the harvest ritual to the uninitiated. In Andalusian culture harvest time means that men and women come into close contact as rigid rules of social conduct are suspended when they temporarily work together in the fields.⁴ Aroused by this unaccustomed contact and by the affinity they feel for the land, men and women become less inhibited, more open to suggestion from sexual energies. Singing their poetic song, the reapers enact in words the subtext of their function here. On one level they harvest wheat, while on another more important one, they seek sexual satisfaction. The incantatory nature of the mens' song, cutting into the silenced atmosphere that only Maria Josefa has dared to disturb, strongly affects the frustrated daughters: they respond, says Bluefarb, in anti-strophe fashion as a Greek chorus would (112-113). Unlike Bernarda, Poncia has not allowed social reality to embitter her; nor has she had to escape into "madness," as Maria Josefa has had to do. She chooses instead to see men not as enemies, but as natural agents of sexual fulfillment.

Despite those times when Poncia speaks freely from her essentially positive, womanly self, many times we see her acting out the more immediate role of servant to Bernarda. On the one hand, they do play out the mistress/servant paradigm traditionally, in that Poncia has no overt power. On the other hand, these two have developed a symbiotic relationship in which one must depend on the other. Since Poncia relies on Bernarda for sustenance and Bernarda on Poncia to carry out her wishes,

intimacy outweighs enmity. By turns gossipy and flattering, candid and dissembling, Poncia strongly tries to persuade Bernarda to look below the spotless surface of things, to see what is really happening to the Alba daughters. Although Robert Lima maintains that Poncia is the only character who opposes Bernarda with any strength (266), we see her defeated by Bernarda's superior position and haughty attitude. Acquiescing and falling silent, Poncia knows that catastrophe must result, for in the end she has failed to bridge the chasm that separates the two poles of feminine experience in this house.

Part IV: The Subjugated Self

How Lorca locates two of the Alba daughters with respect to their choices in actuating identity becomes the most absorbing concern in his play. As the first, Martirio progressively assimilates her mother's methods as her own, to such a degree that she acts for her mother. And the second, Adela, most closely mirrors her grandmother's philosophy, becoming locked in combat with her mother's surrogate, Martirio. The difference between the two sisters lies in the fact that Adela "does" while Martirio simply "wants." Representing more fixed, less fluid patterns of experience, the three older characters--Bernarda, Maria Josefa and Poncia--have had more time and freedom to live out their lives. But the younger women in this house, the five daughters that range in age from twenty to thirty nine,

have had less time and opportunity to make choices for themselves. Amelia, Angustias and Magdalena seem unwilling or unable to extricate themselves more than momentarily from their mother's grip, while Martirio and Adela become prime actors in the drama, playing out the central conflict inherent between the two poles of experience.

Lorca has Martirio so closely adhere to her mother's attitudes that she becomes an incarnation of Bernarda. Bernarda's notion of rectitude filters through Martirio, who is determined to stop Adela, as her mother would. Martirio not only sounds more like her mother, as time progresses she looks and acts like her too, wearing black and calling for silence. Having been left bitter and alienated by an earlier disappointment in love, Martirio moves mechanically through empty days. On her way to becoming an embittered woman trying to control others instead of living for herself, Martirio the "martyr" looks to gain her own ends. Since these motives center around adoration of Pepe el Romano, her sister Angustias' betrothed, she must of necessity conceal them. She becomes more and more obsessed with Adela's actions. With only a wall between them at night, Martirio knows what Adela does and watches her every move. Instead of confronting her sister, however, Martirio hints that she knows that Adela meets with Pepe. This threat heightens tension until, in a seminal scene in Act Three, when Adela returns from a tryst with Pepe. Martirio fully appropriates her mother's way by pointing to her sister and revealing the "sin" she has committed. Unable to act upon her desires, since she is shackled by her mother's interference and influence, Martirio rages against one unfettered by those values.

Because of diminished circumstances for Adela, Lorca creates in her one whose imaging capabilities are impoverished and less powerful than

her grandmother's, whose life and language her character emulates. On the continuum of feminine experience and attitude, she most closely resembles her grandmother Maria Josefa. What results for Adela, who refuses to capitulate to circumstance, however, is a severe diminution of Maria Josefa's imaginative expression. This youngest daughter's passionate personality makes events happen and forces others to examine themselves. Like the old woman, Adela opposes the life-denying ways of Bernarda, and her language also signifies a life-affirming stance. Adela opposes the need to present scrubbed white surfaces or drab black mourning clothes for appearance sake, so she adorns herself with color to celebrate life. She opposes the walls that hem her in, so she actively asserts herself to gain freedom. And she opposes the silence that stifles the self as she speaks expressively about inner experience. But unlike her grandmother whose alluvial imagination could nourish the self in familiarly connected roles for the woman, Adela's equally fecund capacity has no such locus that connects her realized self to another, and another still. Whereas Maria Josefa once had the freedom of having acted in the world, Adela has had no such opportunity. Within the confines of this place and time, she cannot freely go where her imagination takes her: she cannot become Pepe's wife and bear his children, let alone become connected to a community of women. Instead her power comes from being centered in sensation; that is, her imagination fixes itself on the physical body.

As he had done with Maria Josefa, from the first scene Lorca uses adornment as a feminine principle for Adela. Like her grandmother, whose colorful bridal flowers and jewelry imaged a sexual ritual, Adela loves the emblematic power of colors and flowers to adorn her body. In early scenes she expresses herself through a blazing series of colorful

articles, but her actions become so successively muted that at the end, little of this colorful expressiveness remains. In an early scene Adela hands her mother her own red and green flowered fan, which Bernarda throws to the floor since mourning allows no frivolity. Adela's fan provided too stark a contrast to the unvarying black-and-white atmosphere of this house. Later, Adela speaks longingly of a lovely green dress, made before the funeral, that she wants to wear while eating watermelon at the village well. During the reaping scene, as she listens to men who would have admired her dress and fan, Adela pays special attention to the men asking the women for roses: flowers become transformed for her, from icons of self-adornment to symbols of sexual experience. By the end of Act Three, a white-petticoated Adela, frustrated in her clandestine affair with Pepe, defiantly declares that if she cannot marry him, she will wear the "crown of thorns that belongs to the mistress of a married man" (208). Her grandmother has worn a wreath of flowers to symbolize the marriage ritual; in contrast, Adela's headdress represents a fragmented, perverted version of the creative union of marriage. From flowers to thorns, from vivid color to the "virginal" white she will be buried in, Adela's ornamental divestment underscores her psychic diminishment.

Another motif Lorca associates with both Maria Josefa and Adela is their opposition to restrictive spaces in favor of openness and freedom. By seeking escape and demanding that doors be opened, Maria Josefa provides the model for Adela's wanting to break free from her mother's stifling influence. Adela's restlessness grows to such a degree in Act One and into Act Two that it quickly pervades the house, forcing others to take notice. Almost all of them comment on her moodiness and her inability to sleep. But as the tension between her need for freedom and the others' need to

contain her grows, an outburst against her most ardent jailor, Martirio, becomes inevitable. By Act Three every movement by Adela out of the encircling oppressiveness becomes more sharply curtailed; by this time, she can only go as far as the gate in the yard while accompanied by her sisters. Unlike her grandmother who once lived unrestricted among people in houses open to everyone, Adela will never be able to pursue authentic identity in these circumstances.

For Maria Josefa the sea as a place represents the source of her being, the site of union with the other and the means through which she reproduces herself. For Adela no such natural force exists, except a river imaged solely as a power that propels her toward Pepe, not as a source of inspiration. When events conspire to cut her off from even this attenuated power within, we sense her dejection. In Act Three she twice asks for water, a simple act but one that forcefully symbolizes a diminishment of Adela's "river" into a thirst that now goes unquenched.

Frustrated in her attempts to imitate her grandmother, Adela cannot adorn herself, escape from here or imagine a place of fulfillment. However, because she has been able to take such action as she could, her own body becomes the imaginative field of sensation that fires her language. On the level of female sexual experience, Adela cannot live out identity in the context of family or community. But her body provides an imaginative focus, which in turn empowers her will to the extent that she becomes able to confront the formidable force that oppresses her--her mother Bernarda.

Lorca does give Adela a "place" that she can control with some degree of certainty, an imaginative body-self that exists because of sexual experience. Adela derives a stronger sense of self, especially through tactile imagery associated with heat. By the time the play begins, Adela has already begun

meeting with Pepe. In the highly charged atmosphere of harvest when people draw close to the land and its natural processes, Adela responds to the time and to the man by becoming obsessed with her body. By imagining a fire rising within her and locating that passion in her mouth and legs, she both relives the sexual experience and further empowers her imagination, which in turn strengthens her resolve.

For Adela, the man's influence and touch awakens her own power, for within the locus of her body lies the potential for image making and the impetus to take action. Coming into her own, Adela has been emboldened by even this limited imaginative experience, so much so that she will overcome all obstacles to Pepe, including her mother. All of her confidence and power converge as she takes action against her mother that culminates in her breaking Bernarda's cane. In this cloistered, silenced world such an overt act of defiance takes on momentous significance. By destroying her mother's most prominent symbol of potency and authority, Adela takes the one most significant action in the play, breaking some of her mother's obstinate spirit as well as her cane. Her revolt, says Busette, represents the right of every individual to resist oppression (188), while Edwards (249) and Smoot (174) both see her as drawing together in her poetic words the concept of freedom for which others also strive.

Lorca shows in Adela one who can ultimately do little else within the contractions of her mother's domain, since she has tried to image and act to bring herself into union with another, as did her grandmother. Unlike her grandmother's life, Adela's unsanctioned sexual identity will not allow her to live authentically. This character had wanted more, had tried for more, but her mother's obstinance and her sister's vindictiveness prevented it. Now, in the last moments of this drama, the only Alba daughter who has

tried to break free locks herself in her room, choosing death over life without the man who inspired her. Adela would rather destroy herself at once than allow others to do it relentlessly, over interminable days of confinement in the house of Bernarda Alba. Death, observes Bluefarb, sets the tone here, instances of it opening and closing the play (118), while Oliver calls the ending "one of the most deafening notes of despair" he has heard in drama, made more so because of the oppressive silence that masks any sound(14). "The preservation of Honor," Robert Lima concludes in a statement that aptly describes Bernarda Alba, "leads to the frustration of love, hence, of life itself; this frustration, in turn, becomes a despair which leads to death" (291).

Notes

¹ For this discussion of social customs and mores in the south of Spain, particularly Analusia, I am indebted to two studies: Stanley Brandes, Metaphors of Masculinity: Sex and Status in Andalusian Folklore (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980) and Allen Josephs, White Wall of Spain: The Mysteries of Andalusian Culture (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1983).

² Translated literally as "big-balled woman" (Brandes 93), in Bernarda's case, this is an apt if anatomically incorrect and male privileged term for a woman with typically "masculine" attributes of courage and determination.

³ Federico Garcia Lorca, "The House of Bernarda Alba," Three Tragedies: Blood Wedding, Yerma and Bernarda Alba, trans. James Graham-Lujan and Richard L. O'Connell (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941) 164. This is the standard translation used by all commentators researched into and referenced by this study. Since the emphasis in this chapter is not on his characters' language per se, but instead on Lorca's stage imagery, and especially the atmospheric images tied to the Alba house, this definitive translation serves adequately. One of Lorca's primary images, that of silence, translates perfectly, since silence is a universal language. All subsequent quotations of Bernarda will be from this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text.

⁴ Stanley Brandes' chapter "Space and Speech at the Olive Harvest" in Metaphors of Masculinity, describing this time as one of particular sexual awareness, provides an eloquent gloss for Poncia's own heightened description.

Chapter 5

LAWRENCE AND REPUDIATION OF THE SELF

The deep split between the individual and social selves described as the informing principle in this study, as well as the dramatic technique used to illustrate it, becomes manifest in the plays written by D. H. Lawrence. In the way that his characters' inarticulate language conflicts with stage images, Lawrence illustrates with his particular technique that lives become diminished as characters learn that they cannot rely solely on language to make choices for the self. For Lawrence as for Lorca, poetic images for the stage are not simply verbal; besides words, Lawrence uses gesture, sound, costume, setting and objects to convey sense experience that does give meaning on multivalent, symbolic levels.

As an early modernist playwright who wants to explore choices for the self as well as communicate skepticism that language can indeed articulate identity, Lawrence does provide a bridge to the high modern era, a time when writers assert that no assurances about identity can be given. As a character's articulation decreases in Lawrence's naturalistic drama, living out an identity based upon choices for action decreases also; and authenticity, or resolution of the self/other dichotomy, becomes difficult if not impossible.

David Herbert Lawrence (1885-1930) has acquired a reputation today primarily as the writer of such novels as Sons and Lovers (1912), Women in Love (1916), and The Rainbow (1915). In addition he wrote short stories,

poetry and essays of various kinds, all having received a good deal of critical attention. But he also wrote some seven plays and a fragment, most of these garnering little consideration until after The Complete Plays of D. H. Lawrence was published in 1965 and several were produced by the English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre in 1967 and 1968. Arthur E. Waterman speaks for the generally unenthusiastic opinion of Lawrence the dramatist before these watershed events when he says that Lawrence "didn't take his dramatic work very seriously," and that he did not even know too much about the theatre, not having attended often (142). Critics ignored Lawrence's plays, Waterman goes on to say, because "none of them is very good drama and contains nothing new in dramatic technique" (143). Justifying his own study of the plays by seeing them as important only in their thematic relation to Lawrence's novels, Waterman concludes by saying that largely because Lawrence was simply using the dramatic form to work through his ideas before developing them novelistically, only two of his plays have any stage possibilities (150). In 1968 Peter Gill, director with the Royal Court Theatre in London, proved this critic wrong by successfully bringing four of them to the stage and reviving interest in Lawrence as a theatre artist.

In response to the limited role given to the Lawrencian dramatic canon by critics like Waterman, contemporary commentators like Keith Sagar and Sylvia Sklar have carefully examined the historical and cultural contexts of both the writing and the production of Lawrence's plays, concluding that his drama had been undervalued until events in the 1950's and 1960's brought attention to it. Sagar says that television productions in the fifties helped

bring the plays to the Royal Court in the sixties, which "opened our eyes to the power of. . .a major English twentieth century dramatist" whose naturalistic plays have now become part of numerous British acting company repertories (155). In her book length study of Lawrence's plays, Sklar confronts the myth that Lawrence was uninterested in the theatre and that he dabbled in drama until he could fully explore his themes in a novelistic format. Sklar traces his love of theatre from the time of his boyhood through to his mature passion for Chekhov and his admiration for Synge. Of his apathy toward production of his own plays, Sklar points to his disillusionment with what he saw as artless theatrical conventions of the British stage in the early twentieth century: "Lawrence cared deeply for the fate of the theatre," Sklar notes, "and passionately desired to replace the false and inept conventions. . .with the true and appropriate values that he felt to be embodied in his own plays" (34). Because of his reforming ideas, and his lack of connection to the contemporary theatrical establishment, his persistence in writing drama is remarkable, as is the fact that three plays were published and two produced during his lifetime. To Lawrence, who refused to think in hierarchical terms, all literary forms, including drama, were equally serious. In this light, then, his plays can be studied as integral works, not simply as adjuncts to his more well-known novels.

Lawrence's first play, A Collier's Friday Night (1906), deals with much the same material as does Sons and Lovers; that is, a woman resents marriage to her collier husband as well as the relationship between her son and his young woman friend, but the play does end in a truce between them. The Daughter-in-Law (1911), another "collier" play, tells the naturalistic story of a family and its material concerns, as the wife seeks a better life than the one that her husband provides. His next three plays, The Married

Man, Altitude and The Merry-Go-Round (1912) are all comedies: the first is a farce about a scheming married man with two mistresses who gets caught, the whole detailed in scenes that Lawrence himself said needed rewriting; the second, a fragment of a satire about the foibles of Lawrence's friends, was meant as a private entertainment (Sklar 213); and in the third, a comedy of manners about several pairs of partner-switching lovers, Lawrence experiments with language that can express feelings dramatically. In Touch and Go (1920) Lawrence describes the tension produced by the struggle between capitalism and labor in a strike-ridden atmosphere, while also portraying the struggle between lovers who cannot resolve their love-hate relationship. David (1926), composed in sixteen short scenes, reshapes the biblical story in a densely poetic style that suits Lawrence's attempt to show how a crisis of faith remains unresolved.

As the most ambitious and well-developed of Lawrence's plays, The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd (1913) examines, as did several others, the naturalistic world of the collier. The best example of Lawrence's developing an effective stage language, Mrs. Holroyd embodies working class life during a time when British contemporary theatre did not accommodate such naturalistic forms. In his review of the play, critic Hubert Griffith corroborates the fact that Lawrence had made a play "outside the tradition" in that it dared to present uncertain characters whose desires and instincts oppose one another (qtd. in Sagar and Sklar, 290). Lawrence wrote in 1913 about his desire to give the theatre a new type of drama: "I am sure we are sick of the rather bony, bloodless drama we get nowadays--it is time for a reaction against Shaw and Galsworthy and Barker and Irishy (except Synge) people--the rule and measure mathematical folk" (quoted in Williams, 257). In the same year, 1913, Lawrence revised his two-year-old

play, Mrs. Holroyd, unsuccessfully trying to get it staged himself. He was gratified to have it produced in 1920 and 1926, expressing his desire, in the second instance, to hear cast opinion since he wanted to revise it for still another production (Sagar, 161-67). Today, the play holds up because, as Sagar and Sklar point out, "where else in our [British] early twentieth century drama do we find any comparably intelligent attempt to deal with personal relationships on stage?" (320).

In order to gain access to this text, several assumptions first need to be articulated. As Diane S. Bonds points out in her study of the novels called Language and the Self in D. H. Lawrence, language for Lawrence both liberates and imprisons the self, since it involves his method of being so self-interrogatory that she calls his writing a process of self-deconstruction (5-7). Bonds writes from the premise that texts, created as part of a culture's conventional signifying practices, promote assumptions through which the reader becomes ensnared. A questioning reader like Bonds looks at the omissions, partial truths and contradictions in the text in order to expose, as Barbara Johnson has put it, "the warring forces of signification within the text" (5). On the one hand, Lawrence promoted in his writing the idea of what he called "art-speech," a system of symbolic meaning that unites perception and feeling, subject and object in an organic wholeness (Bonds 10). Of course, this technique recalls that of Anderson, Synge and Lorca, since they used symbolic stage imagery to illustrate how their characters discovered the range of selves they would like to play. On the other hand, however, Lawrence recognizes, unlike the other playwrights, that the desire to connect with the world in images and symbols becomes undercut by linguistic disconnection, since language by its very capriciousness cannot entirely reveal truth or convey wholeness. Bonds examines this tension and

how Lawrence found what she calls a "differential metaphysic" that, while reflecting the belief that language can uncover truth, create meaning and communicate clearly, presents at the same time narrative facts that undermine communication and prevent intimacy, thereby eroding a belief in the value of symbolism to help the speaker achieve wholeness (33, 44). Lawrence represents, then, a middle ground between the surety of an early modern like Anderson that language could reveal truth and the high moderns like Beckett who were just as sure that it could not.

As is the case with language, identity also emerges as an ambiguous concept in Lawrence because, as Bonds puts it, two ideas of the self exist in his writing: since his language "troubles the notion of self identity" (23), Bonds asserts that the Lawrencean self as presence and center of personal identity is undercut and rejects the traits that reveal essence (22). And, of course, authentic identity is predicated upon essence as a fixed core of self that becomes knowable to the consciousness of a character through, among other things, his use of language. "The self can exist or be defined only in relation to the not-self or the other," says Bonds about a concept that Lawrence posits in the essay, "Art and Morality," "and as that which stands outside the self shifts, so must the self. The self can have no stable or fixed center" (24). Lawrence's prose, then, does and does not reveal character through action because, as that which is outside the self and a product of differing relations changes, so does the self in this differential mode. Lawrence's seeming equivocation about the self dovetails with those ideas described earlier in the Introduction--the objective, fluid concept of a societal self (Lawrence's differential) conflicts with the essential, private self (Lawrence's symbolic) that could give the social self its uniqueness, if a measure of harmony could be established between the two.

In his plays as well as his novels, Lawrence illustrates how language as a system of verbal relations does not guarantee meaning, since in its differential aspect it leaves meaning ambiguous, unreliable and unable to communicate an essential self. The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd ultimately makes the statement that, although language sometimes cannot accurately convey truth and troubles identity in the process, stage imagery--those sensory impressions conveyed through not simply word but gesture, sound, setting and costume--does transmit meaning. Since the naturalistic world of the English mining community and the limited capacity of language to communicate combine to thwart action here, attempts by these characters to discover a self through expression are undermined. We as an audience, says Sylvia Sklar, become aware that possibilities for these people in this milieu are limited (67). The main character Elizabeth Holroyd, for example, seems unknowable to herself and sees no clear choices for action because she lacks expression of an essential self that is independent of the other for definition. The inconsistency and ambiguity of what she says is belied, however, by what Lawrence suggests in the imagery associated with her character. For all of the characters here verbal text, with all its shiftiness, is undercut consistently by a subtext of stage imagery that suggests meaning. While on one level ambivalent language disconnects the self from others, the symbolic signification of images align these characters to a quest for identity. We become aware of these images that take us down into a character's mind, as we gain access to an interior that Lawrence has constructed, even if it is one of essential poverty. Sklar also suggests an imagistic subtext when she says that stage directions guide an audience, especially with relation to the ambiguous Holroyd marriage (68); and she

corroborates this idea that stage imagery creates a disparate meaning when she says that the setting provides a "glossary" for the dialogue (73).

The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd expands and extends the action of "Odour of Chrysanthemums," (1909) a story written four years before the play. Discussing the differences between drama and the novel, Denis Donoghue remarks that, in prose like Faulkner's for instance, the omniscient author steps in and arranges for the character to reveal that which we know the character could not have conceived; but the nearer drama comes to reality, Donoghue goes on to say, the more difficult it is to sustain departures from credible speech (259-260). We can infer from Donoghue's observation that, while the novelist may be concerned with internal reality, a realistic/naturalistic dramatist like Lawrence focuses on the external. Therefore, Lawrence was limited in how much internal reality he could demonstrate externally, in stage imagery, because he uses verbal imagery sparingly. First, "Odour" begins with Lawrence's striking description of Brinsley. In this prose mining town, says critic Raymond Williams, man's relation to nature and to things is defined, whereas in the "trapped interior" of the play, the rhythm and visual presence of the place cannot be shown (258-59). If Lawrence is limited in how much of the mining environment he can translate onto an essentially static stage, he does, however, comment upon the place through the richly realized symbolic stage imagery connected to the characters themselves.

Lawrence the poet makes use of imagery for the stage by constructing a symbolic narrative, a subtext that circumvents and juxtaposes itself to two types of language, which will be designated here as expository and differential. In his expository discourse Lawrence relates facts that essentially corroborate a central cultural "truth," in this case that the

institution of marriage provides a fixed societal form that allows the individual no room for growth of the self. As an audience we hear these facts clearly, especially with regard to Charles Holroyd, who is the focal point for this expository language: all characters here talk about Charles' personality and behavior, even when he is not on stage. In the second type of language, the differential, Lawrence's characters talk not *about* but *to* one another and, because of the intrinsic ambiguity of differential language, we experience the tension that ensues when no connections are made between characters, or no action taken by characters, as a result of what they say to one another. In both the Elizabeth/Charles and the Elizabeth/Blackmore alliances, differential language creates only a tense state of stasis as married partners and potential lovers fail to articulate essential selves. In the area of experience represented by the stage image, however, Lawrence fixes a ground of being for these inarticulate characters to suggest their attempts at becoming consciously aware of the self. In this symbolic narrative Lawrence sets up an image key for each of the characters, stage metaphors that symbolize experience that we see in ways that they themselves cannot.

Expository Discourse

In his expository mode of discourse Lawrence conveys a conventional idea about marriage. The product himself of an early modern English mining culture, Lawrence transmits ideas about male/female relations that he had no doubt observed. In this mining society, where a man is called "Master" by his wife, if the wife wishes to maintain peaceful relations she will recognize that she has married the job as well as the

man. Accepting the difficulties of his precarious and dangerous work, she will allow him some leeway when it comes to drinking and meeting with friends at the local pub, concessions that release tension and keep an uneasy equilibrium in the marriage. Discussing the life of a miner's wife, A. R. and C. P. Griffin describe her circumstance:

The collier's wife was up early to see her husband and other working members of the household off to work, and she worked late. She was the pivot of the family as economic unit, her life largely one of drudgery. Her horizons were necessarily limited, so it is small wonder that she had a reputation for nagging. The collier fled out of the house as soon as he could, away from the nagging materialism of the woman.

With the woman it was always: 'This is broken, now you've got to mend it! or else: We want this, that, and the other, and where is the money coming from? The collier didn't know or didn't care very deeply--his life was otherwise. So he escaped. For his wife, there was no escape. . . He had the comradeship of the pit and the public house.

She stayed within the narrow confines of the house. (155)

Critics like Sylvia Sklar have commented upon this cultural concept of marriage, concluding that Lawrence would have us feel sympathy for a man who has been driven, although with good cause, from his home by the coldness of his wife (72). Charles Holroyd, then, becomes for Lawrence the flashpoint around which the writer transmits a culturally determined truth about marriage that valorizes the husband's rights over those of the wife. In order to support further this conventional idea about marriage, Lawrence includes several scenes within the expository mode, scenes involving the Holroyd children and a woman visitor to the Holroyd home

that point up the unalterability of this marriage in the first instance and Elizabeth's responsibility for it in the second.

In a second act scene of game-playing in earnest, the two Holroyd children take part in a miniature clash of wills that offers a microcosmic image of the strained marriage they witness daily. Jack, the "man" here, refuses to cooperate with his sister's request and reacts violently, while the "woman" Minnie stubbornly demands the impossible and reacts emotionally. As Lawrence used the children as counterpoint to the Holroyds' marriage, showing how the youngsters' imaginations set them apart, he also points to the future as present in them: they have already begun to take on the characteristics of the cultural roles that are waiting for them and realized in their parents.

In Act II Charles Holroyd drunkenly makes the mistake of taking two women he meets in the local pub home for supper. One of these women, Clara, dominates the scene, with her appearance and her manner, in such a way that she catalyzes the Holroyds' relationship, bringing Elizabeth's slow-boiling resentment to a head. In addition, this low-class Yorkshire woman with her frivolous demeanor and gaudy appearance sharply contrasts to Elizabeth's upper-class ways and simple countenance. Just as Charles' behavior borders on the offensive for taking these women to his home, so Clara's tavern manner exceeds the bounds of good taste. Having been drinking accounts for her uncouth behavior, but when she acts generously to the children, we see another side of her. Saying "*I have been awful tonight,*" ¹ she ends her visit having become somewhat softened for us. Her language, gestures and appearance combine to enhance the impression of lightheartedness and gaeity, especially when seen through the eyes of the children, who see her as laughing, joking and being pretty in

her bonnet and jewelry. Since she cannot be dismissed as patently unredeemable, Clara as a character puts Elizabeth in an unflattering light.

Although he does create in Charles a brutish man whose bullying tactics loom large in this marriage, Lawrence undercuts with other evidence this image of him. Making Charles Holroyd the object of attention here, Lawrence galvanizes the conversation of all the other characters around him. First, they defend Charles' actions. Ostensibly in competition with Charles for his wife's affections, Blackmore seems more aligned with him as a male, at one point justifying Charles' outrageously bringing women of dubious repute to his home by saying Charles was "tipsy" and trying to defend himself against the women's derision by asking them to supper (38). Another character, Charles' mother, speaks directly for prevailing wisdom when she says Lizzie's "stiff neck" that will not bow with flexibility to a man she thinks herself above prevents her from complying with conventional methods of manipulating husbands by "coaxing" and "managing" them.

In addition, in a less obvious way, this play gives us the distinct impression that Elizabeth shares more of the blame for the disastrous Holroyd marriage than does Charles, because of her personality and her relationship with Blackmore. Thus Lawrence transmits the culturally valorized idea that the wife has more responsibility for the stability of the marriage than does the husband. The "pride" that Blackmore mentions, as well as her "cleverness" remarked upon by her mother-in-law, combine to have us believe Elizabeth unwilling of meet her husband's needs, which seem simple. She thinks of herself, however, as being more well-bred and more upper-class than Charles. Lawrence particularly contrasts Elizabeth's more articulate and refined speech to the thick dialect heard in those around her, the most pronounced example in the almost

unintelligible speech of Charles. Only Blackmore speaks like Elizabeth, thereby encouraging the audience to couple them with regard to like-sounding speech. Community gossip has paired them already, the townspeople noticing that the young electrician visits the married woman "a bit too often." This evidence accumulates, so that as we begin accepting the impression, through the expository mode, that this too proud and too clever woman bears most of the responsibility for the bad marriage. If she could change, it is implied, if she could become more willing to acknowledge her husband's wishes, she would find peace in her relationship with him. What is said at the level of expository discourse then, supports this inflexible societal notion that the woman needs to make concessions to the man's difficult mining lifestyle.

Differential Language

Because difference essentially defines the selves of these characters, choices for the self are necessarily limited, being contingent upon the unpredictability of another person. Language spoken directly to the other, termed here differential, does not assist any of them in imagining choices; instead, it frustrates choice because it does not empower them to act. In addition, differential language does not help any of them communicate clearly with the other. Verbal patterns of stasis and ambiguity that have developed between supposedly intimate couples reflect instead an inflexible system that frustrates individual growth. All three characters involved intimately with one another--Elizabeth, Charles and Blackmore--engage in a differential language that renders each of them incapable of taking action or coming to recognize a self.

Lawrence's text ostensibly sets out to describe how Elizabeth Holroyd wants to leave her marriage and the grim mining town where she lives: when she says, "I'd give anything to be out of this place," she sums up her central motivating action. Throughout, her language works against this action, creating a pattern of stagnation because none of her words leads to decisive action. Elizabeth escapes neither from the man nor the place. This differential language of stasis that Lawrence attributes to Elizabeth centers around her husband Charles and his actions. Insofar as she can prevent him from doing what he wants and getting his way, her language reflects a self stuck in a pattern of verbal opposition. Elizabeth speaks either to Charles or about him in the same manner: she tries to control a situation that he initiates, usually trying to prevent him from taking an action. Since he disgraces her with his drunken shenanigans, she says, "I'll put a stop to it. . . It's not going on, if I know it: it isn't" (14) and "I'm not going to let him have it all *his* way" (18) and "I won't let you" (21) and "I've had enough" (29). Lawrence means to suggest in this type of language Elizabeth's frustration and feeling of impotence, because nothing comes of her strenuous verbal opposition.

In the one scene with his wife in which he is not unintelligibly drunk, the one after the pub women leave, Charles himself sounds incapable of telling Elizabeth about what Lawrence terms his "apologetic" feelings of shame at having brought the women home. What little he does say does not penetrate her stoniness, and he quickly resorts to what seems a familiar pattern of shouting and banging the table. When Elizabeth later speaks to the children about their father--"What *would* he be like, if I didn't row him" (46)--she acknowledges that they have learned to define themselves and one another by this oppositional pattern. Clearly, for these two, language does

not connect in any meaningful manner. However, as we will see, the subtext of symbolic imagery tells a different story. When the scene ends, for instance, Charles eloquently turns to look at her before he goes out, but Elizabeth just as eloquently turns her back to him. This is the type of tentative, inconclusive action that eventuates from static, differential language.

In the character Blackmore, Lawrence produces a foil for Charles and in doing so, an opportunity for Elizabeth to escape with this younger man, thereby accomplishing what seems to be her aim. In his language, Blackmore manifests a self not present in words and not revealing of essential qualities except as it tenuously attaches itself momentarily to what the other wants. Since language originates from two people attracted to one another, one could imagine the dialogue between them would become emotionally revealing. Instead, Lawrence uses language in a way that seems to disclose a self as the action unfolds, but in fact differential! language eventuates only into an inconclusiveness that renders the relationship ambiguous and Elizabeth's indecisiveness certain. Calling attention to this use of language, Hubert Griffith says that Lawrence's less than articulate characters "speak in short sentences and never more than half of what they are feeling" (Sagar and Sklar, 291).

Lawrence demonstrates a pattern of ambiguity when Blackmore first represents himself as a "gentleman" in the mines, a man who says "all men aren't alike" when comparing himself to Charles. But after asking Elizabeth to leave Charles and go with him to Spain, he reverses himself, saying that perhaps he is not that different from her husband after all. In this conversation between them Lawrence has them make tentative moves toward each other in language--they ask one another questions, for

instance, Blackmore's about what Elizabeth wants to do and Elizabeth's about whether he loves her. To most of these questions they each answer, "I don't know, " the remarkable frequency of that statement contrasting greatly to the one "I love you" that comes from Elizabeth.

Lawrence shapes Blackmore as one not present in his own words. As they begin approaching one another verbally, first Elizabeth then Blackmore retreats into ambiguous language. Blackmore wants her to "live with" him, but he cannot profess love for her and hates a "mess" of any kind in his life, a term loaded with uncertainty. While he discloses to her his feelings of being in "hell" when he sees her with her husband, he equivocates about why. His saying he never had the chance to have a woman of his own, while Charles has, motivates him more than any love he has for Elizabeth. Lawrence ends this act by having Elizabeth agree that she will go with Blackmore "on Saturday," the young electrician replying with the question, "Not now?" Since Elizabeth had never intimated that she would leave with him at any other time but Saturday, this question lends a disconcerting note to an already irresolute sounding scene. Why would Lawrence have Blackmore suddenly ask her to leave with him now? And why would he end the act with the question left unanswered? When heard in the overall context of the character's shifting language, this ambiguous question seems appropriate and goes unanswered because it fits the fluctuating tone that does leave more unanswered than it resolves.

Symbolic Narrative

In opposition to the differential verbal pattern, Lawrence creates another more subtle system of signification that undercuts the spoken word with its inherent ambiguity. In the extraordinary first scenes of this play Lawrence initiates a dominant image-key for each character. If we examine these image strains, we will see them as coalescing to form a symbolic narrative about these characters, one which articulates their motives and actions when they cannot, at the same time as it provides a ground of being for them.

Although Charles Holroyd does not appear until Act II, in the first scene Lawrence images him, through Elizabeth, as a dandy who has "toffed up to the nines" and gone dancing at the local pub. We have seen how Lawrence weaves Charles as the subject of concern and conversation throughout, but the images we come to associate most closely with Holroyd in the first scene are those of sound, since his children mention several times his "shouts" and "thumps." As filtered through his family members, Charles as father and husband makes noise and stirs things up, so aural images as well as visual ones of a "trukey cock" who dances with colorfully bonnetted women come to be associated with him in this initial scene.

A big, blond, "lawless" looking man dressed in black, Charles Holroyd presents a forceful physical presence when he does appear in the second scene, accompanied by two women from the local pub. Besides his visual

physicality, the sounds associated with him in Act I now swirl around him through his gestures and language. Charles is not self-aware, but his actions tell us a good deal about him. In his boorish behavior with the woman Clara, he exhibits characteristics opposite to Blackmore's sensitivity. All bluff and bravado, Charles first tries cajoling and then force to extricate the women from the awkward scene. In response to his wife's justifiable rage, he reacts defiantly, shouts to "get his courage up," threatens her with his size, bangs on the table and says he is treated like a "dog" in his own home. In contrast to his wife's more formal diction, Charles speaks in the thick dialect common to the local miners, which serves to heighten his inarticulateness. Returning the same night in a drunken stupor, his speech further disintegrates, until he is all but unintelligible. But the "sights and sounds" of him in this scene further corroborate the bully image we have of him. He strikes the door violently, shouts loudly and, when he awakens from passing out, attacks his wife's lover Blackmore. Action here that symbolically keys forcefulness to an inarticulate Holroyd prepares for change later, at the end of the play, when his symbolic key will shift during a time of crisis and decision for his wife.

As Lawrence had used the Holroyd children to support the conventional idea of a stultified marriage, he also brings them into play to strengthen Charles' symbolic narrative. Childhood represents wholeness, but for adults this time is unrecoverable, since their imagining in language fails with time. Using the two Holroyd children to point up the fact that in childhood imaginations are in full play, Lawrence shows us how these particular children, not yet corrupted fully by their environment, relate with curiosity and openness to the world around them. The image they use about their father "dancing with a pink bonnet" sets the tone since they see

metaphorically and create pictures that excite them in order to make sense of events and to find solutions to problems--skills lost on the adults here. When these two actually meet the two "bonnets" their father brazenly brings\ home, they become enthralled by the two exotic women, aligning themselves briefly with the frivolity and fun they see in them. Elizabeth's disapproving aspect provides the tension in this scene as children innocent of its import fraternize with the enemy. The son Jack becomes even more intimate with them when he moves close to Clara and touches her earrings and bracelets in fixed fascination. All these objects--the frilly bonnets, the earrings and the mosaic bracelets--image either the lighthearted or the loose woman, depending on whose perspective you choose. By touching these objects, Jack symbolically accepts his father's more positive way of seeing these women, a point that Sklar disputes when she says that Holroyd recognizes his own weakness for the tawdry women when his son becomes so easily fascinated by them (70).

Lawrence does not give Blackmore, Charles' fellow worker and Elizabeth's admirer, a surname, but he does create strongly tactile gestures for this character. This stage imagery moves him toward Elizabeth, as Lawrence creates a mode of interaction apart from inarticulate language by having characters relate to one another through symbolic keys. We have noted how these lovers cannot connect on the verbal level, their language denying them access to one another as it denies them access to themselves. But while Lawrence uses language to move him away from Elizabeth and a relational "mess," strongly tactile imagery associated with Blackmore contradicts the ambiguity of language as it moves him toward her and makes a coherent symbolic statement about the characters. Touch signifies presence, or at least an attempt at making those emotional connections that

help define self. Carefully building up a tactile mode for Blackmore, Lawrence establishes in the character's gestures a motive that moves him toward Elizabeth, his gestures growing ever more symbolic of intimacy: he washes then dries his hands on her freshly washed towels; he helps her fold sheets, touching her hand as he does; he puts his hand on the wall outside her chimney to feel its warmth in the mornings as he walks by on his way to work; and when he puts his hand on the table next to hers, he says, "they sort of go well with one another" (17). This first scene strongly establishes, through his unique gestures, Blackmore's need to relate and be defined by his proximity to Elizabeth, even though ambiguous language at the same time deflates this closeness.

As he had done with Charles and Blackmore, Lawrence develops in the first scenes images of a narrative nature--these tied to light, heat and whiteness--in order to describe Elizabeth Holroyd's two ways of being. First, as the wife/mother and the nurturer in this traditional family, Elizabeth tends the fire, itself synonymous with the light, warmth and sustenance that emanates from it. The "deep, full red" fire dominates the darkened room as the play opens, giving off a warm glow that she eventually augments with a kerosene lamp. This fire of Elizabeth's supplies the family with food as well as giving it illumination, but Lawrence intimates that this mother, wife and friend with "cold hands" does not relate to others intimately, by touching them. The cumulative story we collect from her gestures does not however corroborate this view. Early in the play, we see her drawing her hand away from Blackmore. Later however, when Charles encounters the rat, she stretches her arms out as if to keep her husband from harm; then, overcoming her own fear, she runs to the door and flings it open to let the rat out. Still later, when Blackmore raises his fists to strike

Charles in self-defense, she rushes at him, trying to stop him from hitting her husband. In these gestures Lawrence eloquently speaks for her when she cannot. They suggest that she fears intimacy with one man while caring more for another than she will admit in words.

Sylvia Sklar points to the setting, and specifically the Holroyd cottage, as a "synechdochic image" that juxtaposes cleanliness, warmth and human emotion to the threat of death, and the de-humanizing influence of the community that surrounds it (65). Sitting off by itself, away from the houses of the other miners and their families, the house becomes strongly associated with the woman who takes pride in her being different from others, standing apart from them also. If the house can be viewed as belonging primarily to Elizabeth, then the pit mines encroaching outside the door represent the forces, including her husband, that oppose her. In visual poles that Lawrence sets up, we see her internal conflict clearly, although she does not. The world down in the mines is dark, colorless and dirty; above ground, more of the same saturates the village and encroaches upon Elizabeth's house. Charles himself, in addition, epitomizes some of the values underlying the outward signs. Rough-hewn, ill-spoken, uncivilized, insensitive--he belongs to the mines and to the town as Elizabeth does to the gentrified, lace-curtain society she seeks to impose on her environment as it is emblemized in the white cleanliness that we associate with her. Sklar summarizes that Elizabeth's battle against dirt symbolizes the moral struggle she wages against her husband (66). White heaps of sheets, white curtains, clean roller towels, a white apron: these stage images associated with Elizabeth contrast sharply to her "swarfed and greased" husband who dresses in black and who has taken her to live in this "vile hole" with its rats and dirty vines.

Lawrence continues to build onto and strengthen with stage imagery the impression of Blackmore found in scene one, when later the electrician brings a drunk Charles home. At one point, after the fight with Charles, Blackmore bends down to massage Elizabeth's feet, a gesture that signifies his wish to make love to her. Directly after this, he almost tenderly wipes the unconscious man's face, leading a surprised Elizabeth to ask why he should care for his enemy. Does Lawrence intend for this similarly tactile action to detract from the intimacy with which this man strives toward Elizabeth? In fact, Blackmore's caring for Charles lends so much depth to an expression of self that seeks affinity through touch that Lawrence will use this mode to describe Elizabeth's change of attitude toward her husband later.

In this act Lawrence continues to spin out the thread of symbolic action for Blackmore, as the character closes the physical space between him and Elizabeth. We have seen him touch her hands and feet. Now, as he kisses and caresses her, we become aware that the dialectic between these two selves has played itself out in the silent realm where the tactile mode speaks for them. At the same time that language equivocates, emotional intimacy becomes manifest in gestures for the stage and the relationship between idea and gesture, signified and signifier, becomes clear.

As soon as a meeting between the selves takes place on this symbolic plane that translates itself in the physical, Lawrence dissolves it by intensifying the ambiguous relational language between the lovers described earlier. This language, especially as it plays itself out in Act III, blunts and deadens the effect that their embracing has on us. Blackmore's saying, before he leaves in Act II, "we can't keep on being ripped in two like this" clearly points to the abruptness with which Lawrence disjoins what

he unites. Noting that their relationship depends upon a child-like dependence, Sylvia Sklar says that, when Charles dies in Act III, any mutuality between Elizabeth and Blackmore has been undermined by a "fundamental disagreement" established in Act II (80).

After the men bring her dead husband home from the mines in the last act, Elizabeth cannot look at him. Seeing this robust, big-muscled blond man in her mind's eye now, she will not look upon the reality of his miner's body, diminished in death. Earlier, she had said she was "sick of the sights and sounds" of him (28). The sight of him at the beginning, when he was the arrogant "turkey cock" she mimicked, had caused her to resent him. Throughout, Charles' harshness had manifested itself in loudness--shouting, banging, he sounded as forceful as he looked. Now in death he is silent.

When she reacted to the potency of his being--that is, his imposing physical body and his loudness--Elizabeth would not speak to him or touch him. Now she responds by not looking at him, but she does finally touch him, the most intimate of sensual signs. In life Charles "destroyed love" she says, because his lack of self rendered him incapable of it. She imagines her husband having been body and nothing else, an outer shell of a man who had "no anchor, no roots, nothing satisfying. . .or permanent" in him (42). She searches out metaphors to express the impermanence and insecurity she feels in being married to an image of masculinity with no satisfying qualities to attach herself to. Her identity as Charles' wife, the cultural role given to her, began as a result of other negative forces in her life. Just as Charles has "nothing" at the bottom of him, Elizabeth before marriage had "nowhere" to go and "nobody" to care for her. By default she married Charles, the first man who came along, and one whose surface

physicality attracted her. Her own feeling of deficiency, of absence, was not ultimately filled with Charles' presence, since he was deficient himself; therefore the public self, the role of wife, did not allow for her growth as an individual.

Now Lawrence subtly shifts, with his death, Holroyd's image key, replacing the bluff, potent maleness with an image of innocence. Charles' childlike "rare smile," which his wife had loved, marks his peaceful looking face. As she and her mother-in-law perform the ritual of washing the body, they talk about his fair, lily-white skin that looks to them like driven snow. Calling him her "lamb," his mother recalls him as a baby wearing a pink bonnet with a feather in it. At first this image serves as contrast to the pink bonnetted woman we saw earlier because an innocent babe little resembles a lower-class chippy. Yet baby Charles wearing a pink bonnet naturally aligns him to the jaunty, life-enhancing attitude we saw in Clara.

Ironically, there is more life to hold onto for Elizabeth in Charles' dead body than in his live one. Whereas she had chosen not to touch or even approach him earlier, now she begins to wipe his face gently, as she talks to him about the past and the present. This simple gesture of washing his face signifies that her attitude has shifted. In this long, ritualized scene Lawrence's method of juxtaposing a subtext of symbolic action to the verbal text becomes reconciled as Elizabeth's cleanliness no longer conflicts with Holroyd's grime. The subtext comes to the surface when Elizabeth begins talking to her husband, again doing something she had been unable to do earlier. Her escape from her husband and her environment now becomes irrelevant, as she ministers to him and becomes engaged in being his wife. Throughout, we have seen her involved in being for others, absorbed in her

societal roles as wife and mother, unknowable to herself and with no real choices for action. Unable to bring an essential self to bear on social roles, Elizabeth wanted to disengage from the man and the place, but could not, largely because she has been unable to imagine in language what choices to make in order to become more wholly herself. She faces in this last scene the existential problems of death and aloneness, but without the ameliorative experience of having connected with the other in marital love. Thus unempowered, she cannot become an expanded, more fully liberated self; instead, she allows herself to become passively caught up in the process of widowhood--we witness the *widowing of Elizabeth Holroyd*.

Since the self played out in the tentative and ambiguous differential mode evolves through differing relations, and since the societal expository system provides for no change or growth for the self, the only ground for becoming here is Lawrence's symbolic, the non-verbal realm where the self can find expression, but ultimately there is no resolution here to the self/other dichotomy. In this dramatic exploration into the nature of language and the self, Lawrence contrasts the individual's personal needs (symbolic) against the requirements of the social world (expository) and the ensuing out-of-balance dialectic becomes manifest in the characters' ambiguously differential language. Placing himself more squarely in the high modernist tradition that doubts the possibility of psychic certainty, Lawrence sees little consistency between inner experience and expression of it in a language that can articulate authentic identity.

Note

¹ D. H. Lawrence, "The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd," The Complete Plays of D. H. Lawrence (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1965) 25. All subsequent quotations are from this edition and will be cited parenthetically within the text.

CONCLUSION

We began this study into how dramatic technique becomes wedded to informing principle in early modernist drama by asking several questions, implicitly posed by playwright Arthur Miller. We saw how imagistic elements in language for the stage could be used to explore choices for the self trying to take action and discover its identity, and thus to mediate the conflict between the individual and the social selves. In Anderson's play Mary of Scotland, Queen Elizabeth uses language as a strategy to protect a false self, thus perpetuating the self/other split, while Queen Mary uses imagery in language to mediate the conflict and to re-see her life and affirm her essential self. In Synge's The Playboy of the Western World, Christy Mahon stumbles into the role of paradigmatic cultural hero, a role that does not fit him. Like Mary, he articulates through language his essential self long enough to act out a more authentic identity. Unfortunately, the dialectic between Christy's private self and the communal other does not result in authenticity for him because false public values prove too corrosive; thus, the conflict between the selves is confirmed by this play. Lorca's The House of Bernarda Alba laments a bygone era in which women could live out possibilities for identity; in the present time we see instead women struggling to assert the self in the face of overwhelming cultural oppression. Their futile attempts are mirrored in the powerful stage imagery that resonates from the authentic past as it becomes an artifact in the language of one mad, old woman.

In the way they use imagery, all three of these authors affirm that the conflict between the selves can be dramatically portrayed, even though

choices for resolving the split by acting authentically become lessened for their characters, as does the degree to which each can access an essential self. In these representative early modernist plays, language itself begins to lose its ability to carry truth about identity and the human condition. As we move to Lawrence's The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd we see the dialectic between the selves become an impossibility since only the social, relational self exists here, while the essential one is denied. What is initiated with Anderson is the idea of showing, in a representation of human experience, the importance of a quest for fulfillment. Queen Mary evolves into a self-aware being, one capable of making choices and striving to bring meaning to her experience: her search for authenticity plays itself out through language and is rewarded. This study concludes, on the other hand, with Lawrence's ambivalence about the nature of language, as evidenced in Elizabeth Holroyd, a woman with bare traces of awareness and virtually no choices for action that could bring meaning to her existence in the stultifying mining culture. Both women end imprisoned, one by external forces over which she has spiritually triumphed and the other by her own intrinsic lack of an essential self that could eventuate in choices for acting out authentic identity.

For the playwright, setting significantly determines how technique will represent human experience through relationships. The description of physical stage space and the theatrical realization of a cultural time and place external to the stage--both of these elements of setting impinge directly upon the process through which a character evolves either toward or away from self-actualization. As for the physical settings of these four plays, stage images that elucidate character gain in prominence as we move from Anderson to Lawrence. Queen Mary arrives in Scotland amid

an ill-omened atmosphere, during the misty mighttime at a deserted pier, and later we see her in a stately throne room that does not fit her unceremonious personality: each of these settings does little to illuminate her inward journey for us, since Anderson focuses so strongly on images like blood in her language that accomplish his purpose. Spatial and temporal images in her speech, for example, more strongly represent Mary's struggle for autonomy than does the actual stage space of Elizabeth's prison in which she finds herself. In the case of Christy Mahon, however, Synge exteriorizes images related to character onto the stage a bit more, for instance in Christy's delightedly inspecting the opulent glass jars in his new domain. Even in this play, however, language prevails as Christy's interior landscapes overmatch anything the shebeen has to offer, by way of indicting how his character manifests identity. Finally, Lorca almost entirely dispenses with imagery in speech, as stage images predominate: Bernarda's house, of course, dominates, with its white, claustrophobic spaces that envelop helpless characters without resources like language to help articulate selves.

In contrast to the initial playwright Anderson, who uses little stage imagery, Lawrence, the final one, exteriorizes the image to such an extent that Lizzie Holroyd's being can be seen fully formed in her white sheets and hearth fire, this woman unable to become more because of the encroaching mining culture represented by the dirty vines and scurrying rats.

In the cross section of early modernist drama represented in these chapters, imagery becomes a language in itself, a language representing forces that either enhance or oppose the actualization of the self. Sometimes those opposing forces become manifest in characters like Queen Elizabeth, the townspeople of Mayo, and Bernarda Alba, all of whom block

the individual's development. Elizabeth uses language rhetorically to manipulate public opinion and deny Mary her individuality; the townspeople of Mayo lack a language of their own and want a stereotypical hero to define them; and Bernarda Alba completely suppresses identity in others because she cannot express her own. In Lawrence the cultural setting completely silences the dialectic between the selves, since the mining life confers the only identity there can be.

The movement that is evident in these plays accurately mirrors the philosophical and aesthetic track taken by early modernist dramatists as a whole, as they progressed toward the high modern and postmodern eras. In these plays a devaluation of language and its efficacy to transmit truth becomes apparent in the characters' loss of image-making capabilities. Similarly, there is a devaluation of the idea of authentic identity, as Lawrence demonstrates through inarticulate characters permanently cut off from their actual selves. In addition, we have seen, in all the plays, characters becoming less capable of developing inner lives as those dedicated to preserving social selves prevail. Verse drama gives way to poetic naturalism, which in turn yields to poetic realism, itself giving over finally to a naturalistic social drama. Similarly, assurance about the self gives way to self-questioning, and authenticity to a repudiation of it. The quest for human experience in Anderson has been replaced in Lawrence by an inquiry into the nature of language itself. What has remained is the permutated image, one that carries with it another version of the truth about the human condition--this one, the Lawrencean, anticipates the high modern concept that calls the self and identity into question.

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Vita

Janice Maria Gregorio Oliver was born in Leicester, England on January 14, 1945, to Angelo Gregorio and Doris Joan Gregory. She grew up first in England and later in Providence and Cranston, Rhode Island, where she graduated from Cranston High School. In 1973 she received her Associate's Degree from Jefferson Davis Junior College, in Gulfport, Mississippi, and her B. A. (1975) and M. A. (1977) from the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg. Presently an assistant professor of English at Southern University in Baton Rouge, she is a candidate for the PhD in English from Louisiana State University and the mother of two fine young women. As a way of investing our creative energy in things that will endure and will represent the best that was in us, the Talmud says there are three things we should do in the course of our lives: have a child, plant a tree, and write a book. With the completion of this dissertation, Janice Oliver has accomplished a full lifetime's work.

DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: Janice Oliver

Major Field: English

Title of Dissertation: From Image to Identity: The Search for Authenticity in the Early Modernist Drama of Maxwell Anderson, John Millington Synge, Federico Garcia Lorca and D.H. Lawrence

Approved:

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